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*Pray for the repose of
the soul of
Rev. Nicholas M. Reinhart.
R. I. P.*

REPERTORIUM
ORATORIS SACRI,

CONTAINING OUTLINES OF

SIX HUNDRED SERMONS,

FOR ALL THE

SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR;

ALSO FOR OTHER SOLEMN OCCASIONS.

COMPILED

FROM THE WORKS OF EMINENT PREACHERS

OF VARIOUS AGES AND NATIONS

BY A SECULAR PRIEST.

WITH THE APPROBATION

OF THE

RIGHT REV. JOSEPH DWENGER, D. D.

BISHOP OF FORT WAYNE.

VOL. II.

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FR. PUSTET,

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First Sunday of Advent.

III.

SAVE YOUR SOUL.

“When these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption is at hand.” Lk. xxi, 28. By reminding us of the Last Judgment and its terrors, Jesus Christ admonishes us to enter into the Ecclesiastical Year with the firm resolution to save our souls, to take the necessary care of their salvation. “Lift up your heads; because your redemption is at hand.” “It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep: for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light.” Rom. xiii, 11. That the exhortations of our Lord may not pass you unnoticed, I will speak to you on the care for the salvation of the soul, that great and only care, to which the Ecclesiastical Year should be devoted. I will prove to you that this care is the most necessary, the sublimest, and the sweetest of our life.

PART I.

THE NECESSITY OF THE CARE OF OUR SOUL.

1. All the other cares, which engross our attention, have reference to the perishable things of earthly life: our body, which we feed and clothe so carefully, will, before many years, return to dust. The goods and joys of life are glittering dust, to be swept away by the storm preceding the Last Judgment, and which are altogether without value in the sight either of God or his Saints. Those men whose well-being is very near your heart are little more than transient acquaintances, who must take their farewell of you after a short greeting. “I have seen all things that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit.” Eccle. i, 14. Our souls will never perish. Their eternal happiness or condemnation depends on our care or carelessness. Is there a greater necessity than to take care for our soul?

2. This care cannot be neglected without incurring the greatest damage. There is scarcely an earthly calamity which cannot either be repaired, or soon forgotten. But, your soul once lost, all is lost—all for ever! He who has not saved his soul for life everlasting, within the space of time allotted to him, is cast out of the kingdom of God. He is a branch cut off from the vine, to be cast into the flames of fire. Like the foolish virgins, he stands without the nuptial chamber, the door never to open for him. He is, as the unprofitable servant, cast into exterior darkness, and the talent buried by him is found in the hands of his fellow-servant. Is there any other care on which such momentous interests depend?

3. This care admits neither of delay nor of substitution. Time hastens on. What is neglected to-day cannot be recovered to-morrow. No one can be your substitute. I must save my soul, and you must save yours. "The intercession of Saints," says St. Chrysostom, "would be of no avail, if we did not co-operate." They would, by their prayers, have obtained graces for us of which we should have made no use. Even God's charity and Christ's redemption are fruitless, unless we co-operate with the graces offered to us. Is there a care so urgent?

4. Holy Scripture speaks the same language. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary." Lk. x, 41. "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mk. viii, 36. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. vi, 33.

Alas! where are those who daily put the question to themselves: "What shall I do, that I may have life everlasting?" Mt. xix, 16.

PART II.

THE SUBLIMITY OF THE CARE OF OUR SOUL.

What is our soul in the eyes of God?

To have a proper estimate of this, reflect on the value of the human soul.

1. God made the human soul according to His own image and likeness, for which reason she surpasses in beauty and dignity all visible things. He built the universe for her, to lead her as a queen into her palace. All visible things are assigned to her service. In this world she is like a precious pearl concealed in a variegated shell. Divine Providence culminates in solicitude for the human soul. "Thou becamest honorable in My eyes, Thou art glorious; I have loved Thee." Isai, xliii, 4.

2. The Son of God became man for the sake of our soul; He shed His precious blood to cleanse her from sin. For her He established His Church and dwells day and night in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Therefore, the salvation of our soul is the object of Christ's dwelling amongst us—of His Sacred Passion and Death.

3. The Holy Ghost has consecrated our soul to be His temple, in order to take an abode in her with the Father and the Son. He has adorned her with the greatest gifts of His grace, etc.

3. The Lord moves the heavens, so to say, that He may save our soul. He sends down the blessed spirits to protect His beloved bride. He gave her the name of a Saint, whom He appointed to watch at her side. Therefore, strive with earnestness and zeal to save your beautiful soul. Let us join our efforts with those of heaven, to present her pure and undefiled before the eyes of God.

PART III.

THE SWEETNESS OF THE CARE OF OUR SOUL.

Convinced as we are of the value of our soul, no sacrifice should be too great, no labor too hard, if it is for her salvation. But the Lord has made our care for our own soul easy and sweet. "Come to Me, all you that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. * * My yoke is sweet and My burden light." Mt. xi, 28, 30. He who takes the Lord's yoke upon himself will find sweet delight in it.

1. What does the Lord require from us, that we may save our soul for life everlasting?

a. A firm and vivid faith in His holy word. Is this a

heavy sacrifice? Is not faith the light of life, and our strength at all moments? Faith beautifies our life, and pours heavenly peace into our hearts! How miserable and wretched we should be if deprived of this light? Must we not exclaim with St. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." John vi, 69.

b. What does the Lord require from us? He commands us to love Him from our whole heart. Is this arduous? Is not He the supreme being, and our best Father? Is He not the most amiable being, worthy of all our affections? And are we not happy in His love?

c. What does He require from us? "Keep the commandments." Mt. xix, 17. His commandments are few and light. They are the foundation of our happiness here and hereafter. And if some commandments involve a sacrifice, is not every sacrifice made for the love of God the source of new joys?

2. Our Saviour Himself has done the greater part of our salvation. "I will come and heal her," said the Son of God, when He was to deliver our soul from sin and perdition. And He has healed her by fulfilling for us the entire law, so that nothing more is left for us than to partake of the merits of Jesus Christ. "He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with Him, given us all things?" Rom. viii, 32. What there is yet left to be done, the Lord will help us to accomplish by imparting to us His grace. "I can do all things in Him that strengthened me." Phil. iv, 13.

3. Besides, our Lord has given us the promise of eternal reward. "He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved." Mt. x, 22. "To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna." Apoc. ii, 17. In few instances does the reward of the world equal the efforts of the candidates for its favor. The ocean covers a world of ruins, and the ocean of human life has buried in its depths yet vaster heaps of ruined hopes and vain labors. Nevertheless, never do men weary of launching their barks on the same treacherous sea. God never deceived the hopes of man in the matter of the salvation of his soul.

Peroration: When Jacob had served Laban, his father-in-law for a long time, he went up to him, saying: "Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how great thy possession hath been in my hands * * * It is reasonable therefore that I should now provide also for my own house." Gen, xxx, 29. Let this be the sentiment wherewith you enter into the new year. "Many, many years have I served the world. It is time, it is reasonable that I should now provide also for my own house. Yes Lord, it is time to love Thee and my immortal soul."

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

THE CHURCH INDEFECTIBLE.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Lk. xxi, 33. Jesus Christ has deposited His word that shall not pass away in His Church, the pillar and ground of truth (I Tim. iii, 15), "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mt. xvi, 18. Therefore

I. FEAR NOT FOR THE CHURCH, SHE CANNOT BE DESTROYED.

How often have her enemies conspired against her, how often have they shouted their cries of triumph over her! But

1. She has received the above promise. John xiv, 16; Mt. xxviii, 20. Who is he that pledges his word? It is the Eternal Truth, the Almighty, who confounds the plots of His enemies, the fools. "The hostile powers are destined by God to serve the Church, and promote her welfare." St. Augustine.

2. The Apostles subdued paganism. Consider

a. The means employed. Twelve poor, illiterate, powerless disciples are sent as lambs amongst wolves; and wolves are conquered by lambs.

b. The task to be performed. To preach what was a scandal to the Jews, and a folly to the Gentiles, the adoration of the Crucified, faith in mysteries, restraint of passion, etc.

"If others will not believe the miracles wrought, this only miracle would suffice us, that the world would have been converted without miracles." St. Augustine.

3. The persecutions.

a. They brought the glory to the Church of countless hosts of martyrs.

b. The martyrs' blood became the seed of new Christians.

4. The barbarians who overwhelmed the vast Roman Empire could not prevail against the Church; on the contrary,

a. They bowed down beneath the yoke of the Church.

b. They swept away corruption, and opened a path to the religious epoch of the mediæval ages.

5. The heresies. "There must also be heresies, that they also who are reprov'd may be made manifest among you." I Cor. xi, 19. The good resulting from them was:

a. That the Church opened wide her treasures of Holy Scripture and tradition.

b. That the unchangeableness of truth in comparison with error, to which the disciple gives a different form from that which he received from the Master, and which does not often remain unchanged even in the teaching of the same individual, became the more apparent.

6. The schisms. These made manifest

a. The solidity of union in the Church; whilst the schismatic sects, from day to day, crumbled into new fragments.

b. The folly of disobedience, since all the apostates became the slaves of princes.

7. The attacks of the mighty of this world.

a. They proved to be trials—to awaken slumbering virtues and talents.

b. The King of kings always protected his Church against arrogant princes, confirming the words of St. Chrysostom: "Nothing is stronger than the Church of Jesus Christ. Whoever attempts to combat against her, his strength is broken. What bold undertaking to make war upon heaven!"

II. FEAR FOR YOURSELF, FOR THE CHURCH CAN PERISH IN YOUR REGARD, VIZ.:

1. In consequence of a sinful life. The Lord took good care of His vineyard. (Mt. xxi, 33, sqq.) If He receives no fruits from it, He will let it out to other husbandmen. The vineyard itself will then not be destroyed, but it will be lost to

you. This vineyard—the kingdom of God—is something interior also. “The kingdom of God is within you.” Let us consider what sentence the Lord pronounced by His prophet Isaias, v, 5, sqq.:

a. “I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted.” It is sin that makes the fear of God disappear; and, like robbers, the passions attack the soul, robbing her of all precious relics of grace.

b. “I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden.” Loss of faith is the result of sin, for “whosoever sinneth, hath not known Him.” I John iii, 6. “And as they liked not to have God in their knowledge; God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient.” Rom. i, 28. Mark the mutual relation between faith and morals.

c. “And I will make it desolate: it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged: but briars and thorns shall come up; and I shall command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.” How beautiful this soul once was; and now there is darkness and wilderness; no care is taken of her anymore; the word of God, divine service, and the sacraments, are despised; Sundays and Holidays profaned; and the wild beasts of sin make great havoc in such a soul.

Thus man loses his faith in consequence of sin.

2. By seduction:

a. Satan defrauded our first parents of their faith in God’s word, of their obedience, grace, and happiness, by his delusions. He still, “as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith.” I Pet. v.

b. How many are there who, with Satanic zeal, strip young people of their innocence and faith by their bad example and delusions! “Wherefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day.” Eph. vi, 13.

c. And scandals will always be given. The Lord Himself said so. Therefore, “watch ye and pray,” at the same time remember well that the Church never approves of what is against faith and good morals. “For the sake of the goats which are preserved for the day of judgment, let us not be separated from the flock of Christ.” St. Augustine. Bishop Greith.

Second Sunday of Advent.

III.

DIVINE MISSION AND DIGNITY OF JESUS.

St. John sent his disciples to Jesus, not to receive instruction himself, but that they, hearing from Jesus Himself who He was, might have their belief in Him strengthened. Should we, after mankind have enjoyed the testimony of eighteen centuries, stand in need of such a confirmation! There are many who style themselves Christians in need of such confirmation. Especially to our times is applicable the word of the Lord: "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets." Wherefore it is peculiarly necessary for the Christians of our days to know and consider the proofs of the divine mission and dignity of Jesus Christ. These proofs are taken

1. From the character of Jesus.

1. How great was His love for God! To promote the honor and fulfill the will of His heavenly Father, was His highest ambition. "Did not you know that I must be about My Father's business?" "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work." John iv, 34.

2. How profound His love for all mankind which induced Him to sacrifice everything for them! "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Mt. viii, 20. "The Son of man is come to minister." Mk. x, 45. He made fatiguing journeys, listened to the petitions of the sick and afflicted, etc.

3. How spotless His life! "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" John viii, 46. When we meditate on the character of Jesus Christ, we are bound to exclaim: "Indeed this was the Son of God." Mt. xxvii, 54.

II. From His doctrine, which is

1. Most sublime on the Blessed Trinity, on God the Almighty Creator, on the Providence of Him without whose will no hair falls from our head, on man and his destiny here on earth, and beyond the grave.

2. Most simple and most adapted to our wants as well as to the wants of all ages and nations, and of all classes and condition of men.

III. From His deeds, which

1. Correspond with His doctrine. His doings are worthy of God. His life corresponds with His doctrine, His actions with His words.

2. His deeds are wonderful, manifesting Him *a.* as Lord of nature: He commanded the winds and waves, etc. *b.* As Saviour of mankind, by healing diseases and remitting sins; *c.* as resurrection and life, raising from death the dead. He Himself appeals to His works: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen." Mt. xi, 4.

IV. From the prophecies.

1. Prophecies on Jesus. Daniel and Jacob the Patriarch, foretold the time of His coming; Isaías and Micheas prophesied that He should be born at Bethlehem of a Virgin, of the tribe of Juda and family of David, and that He should be adored by kings coming from distant lands. The prophets, as Isaías and Zacharias, give an account of His public teaching, of His miraculous cures, of His entry into Jerusalem, etc. They foretold even the minutest circumstances of His Passion; as for instance that they would sell Him for thirty pieces of silver, strike Him, pluck out His hair, spit in His face, give Him gall and vinegar to drink, pierce His hands and feet, and cast lots for His garments; that those who saw Him would mock Him, and wag their heads, saying "He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver Him." Zach. xi, 12, 13. Isai. i, 6. Ps. xxi, 7, etc., and lxviii, 22. The prophets foretold of His sepulchre—that it should be glorious: and that He should not see corruption, but mount above the Heaven of heavens, and pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. Ps. xvii, 10; lxvii, 19-34. Isai. xi, 10. Joel ii, 28, 29. They foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and His rejection by the Jews. Dan. ix, 26, 27. Ps. lxviii, 24-26, 108. Isai. x, 21; lix, 20.

With St. Paul we may ask: "Believest thou the prophets, O King Agrippa?" Act xxvi, 27.

2. Prophecies made by Jesus Himself: *a.* of His resurrection. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John ii, 19. *b.* Of the sending of the Holy Ghost. John xiv, 16. *c.* Of the destruction of Jerusalem. Mt. xxiv.

Peroration: Indeed Jesus Christ is He that was to come. Trust in Him, betake yourselves to Him in all your tribulations. There is no salvation in any other. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Act. iv, 12.

Bishop Fœrster.

IV.

THE SCHOOL OF TRIBULATION.

"Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples." Mt. xi, 2. St. John in prison! His manly rebuke intrepidly spoken to Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mk. vi, 18), had brought him imprisonment. The dungeon gates were never opened for him; the morning of freedom never dawned upon him who was in chains in a prison cell for the sake of justice. He had to lay his head under the sword, and to shed his blood as the victim of a woman's hatred. Mk. vi, 21-30. A trying affliction indeed! But such is the disposition of divine Providence. Here on earth we are in the school of tribulation. Every one of us is doomed to be trained for heaven in this school. No resistance is possible. Let me say a few words on this school of tribulation.

PART I.

IT IS A SCHOOL FOR EVERYONE.

There are many in this world of ignorance who never went to school, save to this school of sufferings and tribulations. For suffering is the lot of us all. "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life." Gen. iii, 17. "We are here placed in a valley of tears. The time of our life is, so to say, the eve of an eternal feast.

The eve is no time of pleasure, but of sadness." St. Lawrence Justiniani. For this reason all the world has to pass through the school of tribulation :

1. For every state of life.

a. The rich. Many seem to think that rich people and those in exalted positions know of no afflictions. But it is often observed that the more brightly shines the outward glitter, the more deeply pierce the inward thorns. Could you see all that transpires within the palaces of the rich, you would be witnesses of heart-rending scenes. "Even the king's life is not free from afflictions, but full of bitterness." St. Chrysostom.

b. The poor. How many and how hard are their sufferings and hardships! Solicitude for daily bread—countless privations. Particularize the honest mechanic under the burden of his daily toil; the solitary widow; the orphan child; * * factories; hospitals; etc.

2. Each place.

The same flower does not thrive in all places. There is one, however, that will grow in every soil, it is the passion-flower * * Wherever man may put up a hut, the cross will follow him. Vide Imitat. Christi. ii, 12.

3. For every age.

a. Sufferings in childhood. In tears the child enters the world. How much bitterness is often experienced during the first years of life.

b. Suffering in mature age.—Bodily pains.—Spiritual afflictions.—Domestic crosses.—Grief caused by children.—Persecutions.—Misfortune.

c. Suffering in old age. Old age in itself is a kind of disease. How many infirmities! It is not surprising that many an old person sighs for deliverance and for rest in the grave.

Thus every human being is disciplined in the school of tribulation. It is the world's university. "Great labour is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, unto the day of their burial into the mother of all." Eccles. xl, 1.

PART II.

THE SCHOOL OF TRIBULATION A BLESSING TO EVERYONE.

1. The teacher of mankind is the teacher in this school. Jesus Christ Himself is the master of the school of sufferings. "Though exempt from sin, He was not exempt from sufferings." St. Augustine. The manger in His infancy. The Cross was His companion at every step of His life. On the Cross, in the midst of torments, He breathed His spirit into the hands of the Father. Suffering Christ is our teacher as to sufferings. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps." I Pet. ii, 21. How great is the dignity of this Master! Angels are His ministers, the heavens hear his voice. "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head corporally." Col. ii, 9.

2. The doctrines taught in this school are a great blessing.

a. The school of tribulation leads man to God.

Happiness and prosperity often intoxicate the soul, and make her first forget God, and at last forsake Him. But the Cross draws man to God. Man struck with grief is persuaded of the misery of this life, reflects more on the condition of his soul, listens to the voice of his aroused conscience. All this leads to God. Moreover, by sufferings we are almost forced to pray; and prayer is the way leading to God. "Lord, they have sought after Thee in distress." Isa. xxvi, 16. How many thousand souls have been led back to God by the Cross! The children of Israel in captivity. The Prodigal Son.

b. The school of tribulation trains Saints.

Suffering is like to a flame of fire, taking away from the soul whatever is impure, so that she shines like refined gold. Job, the great sufferer, said: "He hath tried me as gold that passeth through the fire." Job xxiii, 10. Being thus purified, man has ascended the first step of sanctity. Moreover, by suffering, opportunity is afforded to man to exercise himself in patience, the most meritorious of all virtues, and to become similar to his Divine Master, who was "led as a sheep to the slaughter and was

as dumb as a lamb before the shearer." Is. liii, 7. This is a great progress in sanctity. Nay, without sufferings it is utterly impossible to become a Saint. The life of the Saints was the continual carrying of the Cross. . Examples.

3. How splendid are the certificates of this school!

The certificate is signed by the Divine Master Jesus Christ. It is written with His precious blood. We read there: "Where I am, there also shall My minister be." John xii, 26. On producing this certificate at the gate of heaven, the entrance into the infinitely glorious kingdom of life is open to you. "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17. "From the Cross, the way leads to the throne." Imitat. Ch. ii, 12.

Peroration: How excellent a school is the school of tribulation! Be a good scholar. The more patient you are in carrying the Cross, the more you gain the affections of your Master. If you should have corresponded so far with the grace of God as to suffer cheerfully, you have become a Saint, and a bright crown will be yours. "Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord." James v, 7.

Joseph Schuen.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

III.

INFERENTIAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

We believe that God never suffered the child Mary to be defiled by original sin. If He chose to protect her against this common curse of mankind, what was to hinder Him? Who would deny this power to God? Is the legislator not master of his laws, and can he not exempt from them whomsoever he pleases? And "if God can sanctify and justify a soul, after she has fallen into sin, why not, before she is contaminated with it, and at the moment of creation?" Bellarmine. It being beyond doubt that God had this power, the only question that remains is: Was God willing to save this child Mary from original sin? Does our reasoning faculty suggest arguments by which we are induced to suppose this willingness? I will give you the answer to these questions by showing you how we should naturally expect that God the Father, and that God the Son, and that God the Holy Ghost would guard the child Mary against original sin.

I. It was to be expected that God the Father should make this exception in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary, because of the high dignity and position He had destined for her.

1. Mary was His daughter and His first-born daughter of grace, wherefore she could never be a slave of sin. "I come out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures." Eccles. xxiv; 5, Cf. Prov. viii, 22: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before He made any thing from the beginning." "Mary is the one and only daughter of Life, in distinction to all the rest who are daughters of Death, because they are born in sin." Dion. Alex.

2. "Mary was destined by God to be the mediatrix between God and man." St. Basil. She was born "to co-operate for the salvation of the world." St. John Damascene. Therefore

it was most necessary that she should not appear as a sinner and an enemy of the offended God, or as guilty of the very same sin which required expiation, but that as a friend of the Lord she should be preserved from all sin by divine Providence.

3. Mary was to crush the head of the serpent, which, by seducing our first parents, had caused the death of all men. Therefore God must have taken care that she should remain exempt from all servitude of Satan, *i. e.*, from all stains of sin. "If Mary was the strong woman who came into this world to conquer the devil, it is an irrational supposition that it was not becoming that the devil should have been permitted to have first had dominion over her, and to have made her his slave." St. Alphonso.

4. Mary was chosen by the Father to be the Mother of his only-begotten Son; and as all things ordained for God's service ought to be without stain, so God must have sanctified and preserved her soul from every sin, that she might become a worthy tabernacle of God's Son. "The Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Luke i, 35.

II. It is what natural reason would have led us to expect of God the Son, for the sake of his own and his mother's honor.

1. As the Almighty Son of God could choose for his mother whom he pleased, he certainly chose one who would be no disgrace to him, *i. e.*, who was without sin. It is contrary to reason to suppose that the Immaculate God-man could not take flesh and blood from a mother defiled with sin. "It cannot be supposed that the Son of God should have been born of a Virgin contaminated with original sin." St. Bernardine.

2. Jesus would not suffer that his mother's body should see corruption after death. How much more reason had he to preserve her soul from the corruption of sin, which would have been a much greater dishonor to him. "He hath set his tabernacle in the sun." Ps. xviii, 6.

3. If it is expected of any son that he should protect his mother from sin, how could we suppose that the Son of God

should not have done the same! "He who commanded us to honor father and mother, after he had become man, would not omit to fulfill this commandment himself, wherefore he granted to his mother all possible grace and honor." St. Methodius.

4. We all believe that Mary, assisted by special grace, never committed a venial sin, and we should abhor to think the contrary. But if she would not have been worthy of being the Mother of God, if she had been stained by one venial sin, by which, however, the grace of God is not lost, how far less would she have been worthy had she been under the curse of original sin, by which the grace of God is lost?

III. Natural sense would lead us to expect that God the Holy Ghost would preserve the Mother of God from original sin because of the intimate relation between him and Mary.

1. Mary was selected by the Holy Ghost to be His bride. "My sister, my spouse, is a garden inclosed." Cant. iv, 12. We shudder at the supposition that this privileged Virgin, before she became the bride of God, should have been inhabited by the unclean spirit; that the devil should have dwelt in this heart before it was made the sanctuary of the divine Spirit. "I to my beloved, and my beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies." Cant. vi, 2. "Only Mary deserved the grace of being called mother and bride at the same time." St. Aug.

2. "The Holy Ghost descended into Mary personally, and after having enriched her with more graces than all other creatures, he reposed in her, and made his bride Queen of heaven and earth." St. Anselm. Therefore the grace of the same Holy Spirit had sanctified both the body and soul of Mary so as to make her worthy to clothe the eternal Word with her flesh. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," etc. Luke i, 35.

3. Mary could not have been called "full of grace" by the Archangel, unless she had surpassed all by the richness of her graces. Therefore she must have been adorned with original justice, possessed by Adam and the angels, consequently enriched with the fullness of divine grace in her mother's womb.

Peroration: Let us then firmly believe that Mary was ex-

empt from original sin. Let us congratulate her on this grand privilege. Let us praise to-day her dignity and purity with fervent thanks, and say with so much greater confidence: "Mary conceived without sin, pray for us."

St. Alphonsus Liguori.

IV.

MARY HAS CRUSHED THE HEAD OF THE SERPENT.

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head." Gen. iii, 15. These words are understood of the Blessed Virgin Mary by most of the Holy Fathers. And indeed of what other woman than Mary could it have been foretold that she should be victorious over the Serpent? In what manner, then, has the Blessed Virgin crushed the head of the devil? Let us give an answer,

I. BY HAVING BROUGHT FORTH CHRIST, THE CONQUEROR OF HELL.

The Blessed Virgin gave birth to Jesus Christ, who crushed the head of the serpent, by overcoming Satan in open combat on the Cross, and by his own power deprived him of his own kingdom and prey. We read Judges ix, 55, that one woman, when the inhabitants of Thebes had fled into a tower, dashed a piece of a millstone from above upon the head of Abimelech, and broke his skull. One woman of the Jewish nation, the Blessed Virgin Mary, crushed the head of the infernal Abimelech by her Son Jesus Christ "being the chief corner-stone." Eph. ii, 20. Jesus Christ has dashed Satan to the ground by his death, by his admirable exemplary life, and by his doctrine, which is a weapon against the attacks of the devil.

II. BY DESTROYING ALL HERESIES.

"Thou alone hast destroyed all heresies on the globe," says the Church, of Mary. Heresy, being the work of Satan, the

product of his wit, is appropriately called the "head of the Serpent." In the Book of Judith Cp. vii, we read that Holofernes cut off the aqueduct which supplied the children of Israel with water, in order that for want of water they might surrender the city Bethulia. But Judith, the heroine, cut off the head of Holofernes, and thus delivered the city of her birth. Satan, with his men, the founders of heresies, besieges Bethulia, *i. e.*, the Church, Bethulia being interpreted "Virgin of the Lord." For this purpose he cuts off the aqueduct, *i. e.*, the Holy Sacraments, which by his heresies he tries either to deny or to deprave, and the Holy Scripture, which he adulterates. But by the heroine Mary his proud head is cut off, by confounding and abashing the heresies. For the Blessed Virgin is victorious over all heresies,

1. Because she is the *heroine of faith*. By her having firmly believed what the angel told her, that "no word shall be impossible with God," that God would become man, and by adhering to all the difficult doctrines connected with this belief, she conquered and confounded the heretics, who refuse to believe such doctrines as are not in accord with their private judgment.

2. Because she is the *teacher of the Apostles*. She instructed the Apostles, particularly St. John, to whose care she was confided, and who in his Gospel refuted the heretics of his time who contradicted the divinity of Jesus Christ. And from whom else could they have received information about the conception, birth and youth of our Saviour? She in after years dictated to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus the profession of faith; she restored to St. John Damascene his hand, which had been cut off, that he might be able to continue refuting the heresy of the Iconoclasts.

3. By *taking sides with Catholics* against heretics. Narses, in consequence of her manifest assistance, gained marvellous victories over the Arians, Totila and the Goths. The tongue of Nestorius, which had denied Mary to be the Mother of God, was the prey of his own vermin in his lifetime. Battle of Lepanto.

III. BY BEING FREE FROM SIN.

1. *From actual sin.* It is principally by keeping sin from herself that Mary has crushed the head of the Serpent. For, whenever sin finds an entrance, Satan will immediately follow. Amongst the rest of the human race there is scarcely one who has not some time or other listened to his allurements. The Blessed Virgin never listened to him. As of all the king's servants Mardochai only did not bend his knee before Aman to worship him; so the Blessed Virgin never bent her knee before the prince of hell.

2. *From original sin.* This is the head of the Serpent. By the original sin Satan entered the world, and ruined the human race in its very source and commencement, and thence plunged men into other sins. A proof of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the celebration of this festival day in early Christendom. Pope Pius IX declared it a dogma of the Church A. D. 1854. In this regard the Blessed Virgin may say what Marcellus the Roman general said in regard to Hannibal: "In consequence of the many defeats of the Romans he thought himself invincible, until I defeated him."

IV. BY OVERWHELMING THE PROUD DOMINION OF SATAN.

"Satan is the king over all the children of pride." Job xli, 25. Children of pride are all sinners. Mary has received the power to rescue all sinners who have recourse to her succour from the cruel dominion of the devil. Who can doubt that the Mother can dispose of the property of the Son, and that the Queen can admit the wretched who implore her help into the palace of the king? It is for this we praise her as the refuge of sinners, the comforter of the afflicted, the help of Christians, the Queen of all Saints.

Rahab, who is mentioned in the book of Josue, (chapter ii) received and concealed Josue's servants, and let them down with a scarlet cord out of the window, saying to them: "Get ye up to the mountains, and there lie ye hid three days." Mary conceals

the sinners from the king of Jericho, which means, moon, *i. e.*, from Satan. She saves us with a scarlet cord, that is, with the merits of the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ. She bids us fly to the mountain of the Church and spend there a time in penance. Innumerable are the proofs taken from history of Mary being the refuge of sinners.

Peroration : Therefore, let us with confidence go to Mary, the Blessed Mother of God. For she crushes the insidious Serpent under her feet, his poisonous teeth not prevailing against her. Holding the lily of undefiled virginity in her hand, planting her foot on Satan's head, her beautiful countenance radiant with the light of the stars, praised by the angelic hosts as their queen, invoked by Adam's children as the Mother of Grace, dreaded as his conqueror by the infernal dragon, she stands before us; to pour out her blessing upon the globe, and to lead us children sighing in the vale of tears, where on the side of her Divine Son she delights in the eternal joys and glory.

M. Faber.

Third Sunday of Advent.

III.

"A LIE IS A FOUL BLOT IN A MAN."

ECCLE. XX, 26.

"And he confessed and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ." John i, 20. By the thrice repeated assertion, that John the Baptist confessed, and did not deny that he confessed: "I am not the Christ," Holy Scripture undoubtedly intends to intimate the love for truth entertained by this great man. And good reason is there to make emphatic mention of his sincerity, in a world where lying is a common evil. To contribute my share in rooting out this abominable habit, I will to-day dwell on the malignity and bad consequences of this vice. By the first I hope to induce you to hate this vice, by the second to fear it.

PART I.

LYING IS AN ABOMINABLE HABIT.

After giving a definition and division of the sin of lying, the celebrated Preacher shows how abominable it is to lie:

1. To lie is diametrically opposed to truth. Now "all Thy statutes are truth;" the whole divine law is truth. Therefore, to say that to lie is the opposite of truth, is the same as to say, that it is opposed to the whole divine law, whilst other sins, such as stealing, hatred, etc., are opposed to only one commandment. The Pharisees said long prayers, were exceedingly severe in fasting and performing works of penance; but because their zeal was founded on lies, that is on a mere appearance, their virtues were branded by our Saviour as vicious works. He calls them "whited sepulchres," within being full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness; "serpents," "generations of vipers." Mt. xxii, 29, 33.

2. Truth is a perfection of the Godhead, whilst lying is the sin of the devil. "Thy law is the truth." Ps. cxviii, 142.

"Thy word is truth." John, xvii, 17. The Son of God said to Pilate: "For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth." John xviii, 37. And in order to gain due respect for the truth, he declares: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," xiv, 6; and as the truth he was announced by John: "Christ is the truth." I John v, 6. If, then, lying is diametrically opposed to truth, the virtue so highly appreciated by God, who should not be convinced of its being extremely hated by the same God? Holy Scripture assigns this vice peculiarly to the devil, who is called a "lying spirit," III Kings xxii, 22; and "the father of lies." John viii, 44. Lying, being a devilish vice, you may conclude how much God hates it. Liars are an abomination before the Lord. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." Prov. xii, 22. How justified is then St. Ambrose in saying: "All who love lies are the devil's children."

3. Lying is very detrimental to human society. The greatest blessing in the world is the intercourse—the communion—of man with man. If this blessing be taken away, the whole world would be turned into chaos. If the communion and intercourse of human society were abolished, we should be in a worse condition than dumb brutes. The state of society would be the same as in Babel, when the Lord had confounded the tongue of the people; in consequence of which calamity the workmen could not understand the charge of the supervisors, nor the supervisors the designs of the architects. The same effect would be produced by lying, if all men were addicted to this hideous vice, and alas! it is partly produced indeed. For what else keeps entire nations far from the bosom of the true Church, but the lie of representing Catholic doctrine differently from what it is? By what else does the devil turn so many thousands from the great affair of salvation? Is it not by representing to them the lusts, honours and goods of this world, as being valuable, which in fact they are not? What is the cause of the frequent disturbance of peace in families, religious communities, cities and entire nations? The cause of great finan-

cial losses, loss of credit? Is it not the habit of lying? And can you yet doubt the malignity of lying although you know that it destroys confidence, and the very communion and intercourse of men?

4. Lying is so malignant an evil that it is never permitted under any circumstances. Stealing is a sin. Still extreme necessity excuses you from sin, if you take what belongs to your neighbour, to appease your hunger. Murder is an enormous crime. Still there are circumstances when you have the right to take the life of your fellow-man. But as to lying, "no lie is just," says St. Bernard; "it is sinful in every instance." And St. Augustine uses this strong language: "Not even for a good purpose, neither for the eternal salvation of man, nor for the benefit of the whole world, is it allowed to tell a lie." "Lying has an intrinsic malignity about it, so that God cannot allow anybody to tell a lie." Card. de Lugo.

How unreasonable, therefore, is it to say that your lies, as having done no harm, are of no importance? Is that lie, which you dare not tell to gain the whole world, of no importance?

PART II.

LYING IS A HABIT WHICH IS PUNISHED HERE ON EARTH.

1. Telling lies degrades a man in the estimation of his fellow-men. "A lie is a foul blot in a man." This saying of the Holy Ghost is also the general conviction of mankind. Can a greater insult be offered to a man than to call him a liar? A splendid witness is Eleazer. When the bystanders, "being moved with wicked pity," advised the old man, "that he might make as if he had eaten of the flesh of the Sacrifice," he said: "It doth not become our age to dissemble." II Mach. vi, 23. And are we not daily witnesses of lying persons being held in such contempt as not to be trusted, even when telling the truth? If a lie were not a foul blot in a man, why are even bad men so cautious not to be caught in a lie?

2. God will punish the liar. "Thou wilt destroy all that speak a lie." Ps. v, 7. Giezi, the servant of Eliseus the Prophet, told Naaman the Syrian a lie, thus appropriating to

himself ~~two~~ talents of silver and two changes of garments, which the grateful Gentile general thought were to be given as a present to the man of God. On his return he heard these dreadful words from the mouth of Eliseus: "The leprosy of Naaman shall stick to thee, and to thy seed for ever." "And he went out from him a leper as white as snow." IV Kings v. Would that all who by lying hoped to accumulate wealth, would remember Giezi. The fruit of their defrauding will not be what they hope for; the fruit will be perdition, as God threatens by Jeremias: "I will scatter them as stubble, which is carried away by the wind in the desert. This is thy lot * * * because thou hast trusted in falsehood." xiii, 24. The words of Isaias apply to many: "Truth hath fallen down in the street, and equity could not come in." lix, 15. Calamities will befall them in their lifetime as the fruit of their lies. "You may have eaten the fruit of lying." Osee. x, 13. And if your temporal prosperity depends on your disregarding truth, remember the words of the Holy Ghost: "Better is the poor, than a lying man." Prov. xix, 22.

3. If God hates and punishes lying so severely, how great will be his hatred of perjury, which is lying confirmed by oath! How dreadful will be the punishment thereof. The confirmation of testimony by oath has been ordained by God himself. Deut. vi, 13. "An oath is for confirmation." Heb. vi, 16. For men it "is the end of all their controversy" 1. c.—It follows that the perjurer, as far as in him lies, abolishes the last means of ascertaining the truth. Oh! dreadful crime, which invites the vengeance of God! This vengeance is sure to come. The curse shall come "to the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it." Zach. v, 4.

God will treat also those as perjurers who, under oath, made promises either to God or to their fellow-men, and did not keep them. We have a frightful example in Sedecias, king of Juda, who after having sworn allegiance to King Nabuchodonosor, afterwards betrayed his oath. God suffered that, after his

sons had been killed, his eyes should be put out, and that he should lead a wretched life in Babylon. The word of St. Chrysostom, that God is implacable in the case of those who swear falsely, is confirmed by experience.

Peroration: Beware of telling lies. Love truth and sincerity. If men or the devil promise you advantages for telling lies, believe them not. Believe God, who said through Jeremias the Prophet: "Behold, you put your trust in lying words, which shall not profit you." Jerem. vi, 8. Banish the lying spirit from yourselves, from your children, from your house, nay, from the whole congregation, lest the judgment with which Isaïas the Prophet threatens all those who have placed their hope in lies, come upon you: "You have said * * * we have placed our hope in lies, and by falsehood we are protected. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: * * * Hail shall overturn the hope of falsehood, and waters shall overflow its protection." Isa. xxviii, 15.

J. B. Campadelli.

IV.

THE PATH TO HEAVEN IS DIFFIDENCE OF OURSELVES AND CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

"Make straight the way of the Lord." Such is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, a warning we should listen to, especially in the time of Advent. The Lord is come to us in the feebleness of flesh, in the charms of his grace and mercy, he himself prepared his way to us. Now it is our task to prepare our way to him, *i. e.*, to find out and use the right means of salvation. There are principally two such means:

I. A GREAT DIFFIDENCE IN OURSELVES.

The necessity follows

1. From our own inability to work out our own salvation. "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." II Cor. iii, 5. "And no man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost." I Cor. xii, 3.

2. From the sad result of self-confidence in the affair of our salvation. The fall of Peter. Mt. xxvi, 34. "Before I was humbled I offended." Ps. cxviii, 67.

3. From the examples of the saints.

St. Philip Neri prayed every morning, when he awoke: "Lord, hold thy hand over Philip, or Philip will betray thee." The same Saint once exclaimed in the street: "I despair, I despair." When a priest admonished him to put his confidence in God, the Saint replied: "I despair of myself, for I hope all from God." "Wherefore my dearly beloved, work your salvation with fear and trembling." Philip. ii, 12. "Blessed is the man that is always fearful." Prov. xxviii, 14.

II. A GREAT CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

It is necessary

1. In order to prevent the pusillanimity that would necessarily result from diffidence in ourselves. "The higher the scale of confidence is lifted, the deeper the scale of self-confidence will fall." St. Francis of Sales.

2. As shield and weapon in temptation and conflict. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Mt. xi, 12. And it is confidence in God that prompts us to use this violence, "for they that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Isai. xl, 31. "By thee I shall be delivered from temptation; and through my God I shall go over a wall." Ps. xvii, 30. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip. iv, 13.

3. As a consolation for the repenting sinner. He need not despond, for "mercy shall encompass him that hopeth in the Lord." Ps. xxxi, 10. "Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in thee." Ps. xxxii, 22.

Peroration: Resolve firmly to make constant use of this means of salvation. This resolution should stand firm, as "desires kill the slothful: for his hands have refused to work at all." Prov. xxi, 25. "The devil does not fear irresolute souls." St. Therese.

St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Fourth Sunday of Advent.

III.

JESUS OUR AMIABLE LORD.

The Christian displays everywhere the vestiges of God's bounty, and in the mystery of the Incarnation it appears in the brightest light. Wherefore the sweet familiarity is permitted us of calling Jesus our amiable Lord. For him we are to prepare the way. He will be our Christmas-guest. Let us make a good preparation; for the divine guest is our amiable Lord.

I. HE IS OUR LORD.

1. The prophecies describe Him as such. "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool." Ps. cix, 1.

2. Jesus has

a. Proved himself as Lord of nature, of hearts and conscience. His humiliation in flesh is therefore strikingly described as the form of a servant. Philip. ii.

b. He has adopted this title as his own. "You call me Master, and Lord, and you say well, for so I am." John xiii, 13; Mt. xxii, 43, sqq. xxiii, 8 sqq.

3. The Apostles and the faithful generally acknowledge him as their Lord. "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." Mt. viii, 2, 8. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." John vi, 69. "They have taken away my Lord." John xx, 13. "I have seen the Lord." Ibid 18. "My Lord and my God!" Ibid 28.

4. The Church proclaims him as the Lord. "And in one Lord Jesus Christ." "Thou alone art the Lord." "Through our Lord Jesus Christ," etc., in all her prayers.

I wish to God, that in our hearts no Lord might reign but he whose dominion we shall be bound to acknowledge when he comes to judge the living and the dead.

Jesus is ours, and we are his:

1. By creation, and by preservation, or the continuing of

II. OUR LORD.

creation. "All things were made by him." John i, 3. "In him we live, and we move, and we are." Act. xvii, 28.

2. By redemption. "When we were slaves of sin, Jesus bought us with a great price." I Cor. vi, 20.

Application.

3. By our own choice :

a. When we were baptized. "Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ our Lord? I do believe."

b. In all trying moments we fly for refuge to Him.

III. OUR AMIABLE LORD.

1. Jesus deserves all our love :

a. Because he is our supreme good. Everything is estimated by its value. Is it possible for aught to be more perfect, aught more altogether beyond all price than Jesus? What folly to set the supreme good below a leper, the only good below an evil?

b. Because he is so bountiful. His appearance in human flesh is called the appearance of "the goodness and kindness of God." Tit. iii, 4. How could he love us better? "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13. Take to your mind his great affability in his earthly life, his blessings and graces bestowed on you, and then measure the greatness of your perversity in not loving Jesus.

2. Jesus commands us to love him. "Thou shalt love God, thy Lord," etc. But you do not love him, if you only say : Lord, Lord ! Mt. vii, 21.

3. All good Christians loved him. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Rom. viii, 35, sqq. "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema." Cor. xvi, 22.

To express a servant's love for his master, we say that he would run through fire for him. How many servants of Christ did so literally! St. Polycarp, when summoned to blaspheme Jesus, his amiable Lord, gave the answer : "Why, I have served

him now eighty-six years, and never was wronged by him, and now shall I blaspheme him? No, never shall it be! And he was burnt alive for the love of Jesus.

Peroration: Let us then prepare the way for Jesus our amiable Lord, and prove our love to him by taking up his yoke (commandments), which after some trial will prove sweet to us.

Winkelhofer.

IV.

THE EMBER-WEEK.

This week is Ember week, three days of which are fasting days. Thus the Holy Church exhorts us to do penance by fasting and praying. I will seize this opportunity to give a plain and simple instruction on the origin and the significance of the Ember-weeks.

I. ORIGIN OF THE EMBER-WEEKS.

1. The name implies the inauguration of the four seasons of the year by fasting. The Church inaugurates every season of the year by days of penance, which are three in number, as every season comprises three months.

2. The usage of having fast-days at the beginning of each season is very old.

a. The Jews were bound to fast four times in the year. "Thus says the Lord of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Juda, joy, and gladness, and great solemnities." Zach. viii, 19.

b. The Christian Church adopted this usage in the earliest ages. Pope St. Leo calls this fasting observation an Apostolic institution, adding that it had been a Jewish observance too. St. Augustine mentions the Ember fasting also. Pope Gelasius I. writes that it is a pious regulation to fast in the fourth, seventh, tenth month, and at the beginning of Lent. The custom of announcing the approaching of Ember-week in the churches, can be traced back to the fifth century.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EMBER-WEEK.

1. On these days we must beg pardon for the sins commit-

ted during the preceding season. Every season affords peculiar enjoyments, and thereby frequently an occasion of sin. Therefore it is necessary for us to do penance and make acts of contrition. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lk. xiii, 3.

2. We should thank him for benefits received during the past season. Every season is a proof to us of the words of the Holy Ghost: "Every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." James i, 17. "Let us in the Ember-week thank God for our bodily food by depriving ourselves of some of this food, and giving away as refreshment for the poor that which we save by fasting." St. Leo.

3. We should implore God to grant us his continual grace and blessing:

a. His blessing in general, knowing that all depends on it.

b. In particular we should pray for good laborers in the Lord's vineyard, because, especially in Ember-week, priests are ordained. This practice of imploring God's blessing on his ministers by fasting and prayer was observed as far back as in the times of the Apostles. For we read in the Acts of the Apostles xiv, 22: "And when they had ordained for them priests in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed." Our Saviour Himself exhorts us to prayer for said intention, saying: "The harvest, indeed, is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." Mt. ix, 37.

4. We should prepare ourselves to spend the ensuing season in the path of righteousness. The traveller must now and then rest himself, to regain his strength. The soldier wants an armistice to gain new strength. The Christian is both a wanderer and a soldier. The Ember-week is for healing his wounds inflicted by sin, and for strengthening himself for new combats.

Let us then hold in veneration the Ember time on account of its observance from time immemorial, and be anxious to correspond with the intention of the Church, in commanding the observance of these days of penance. Martin Kœnigsdorfer.

Christmas Day.

III.

ANGELS, SHEPHERDS, MOTHER AND CHILD.

The shepherds came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in a manger. Lk. ii, 16. The grand and miraculous event, for which all mankind had been longing during four thousand years, came to pass on this day. The angels of heaven rejoice over it singing canticles of peace to all those of good will. As the Holy Church proposes the same spectacle to our meditation, let us take a survey of all the persons present at the birth of Jesus Christ, for the edification of our souls.

I. THE ANGELS.

1. The good tidings of great joy. "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." It is Herod and his adherents who have reason to be alarmed at the birth of the Saviour, and at religion generally. To noble minds God's deeds and revelations are the object of purest joy. The tidings were as follows: "This day is born to you

a. A Saviour," of whom the sick human race was in need. How glad is the sick man if he is assured that he will be surely healed. He will receive his physician with great joy and a thankful heart.

b. "Who is Christ?" The Anointed. Man sighing under the yoke of sin needed, like the poor man on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, assistance and strength from heaven to recover from his wounds and elevate himself towards heaven. He received this strength through Christ the Anointed, our true mediator and High-Priest, after whom we are called Christians. Let it not be an empty name.

c. "The Lord." Before, slaves of the devil, and subject to eternal death, we are now in the sweet service of the Lord of heaven, to obtain from him true liberty, happiness, and life everlasting.

d. "This day." Millions were longing for this bright and happy day, but did not see it. Simeon was full of celestial joy, because his eyes had seen the salvation.

e. "To all the people." Christ came for all. No one is so lowly, no one so sinful, as to be out of the reach of his mercy. How great a consolation!

f. In the city of David, as it had been prophesied.

"You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Admire his humility. Fear not to approach your God who is an infant laid in a manger."

2. The hymn of the angels.

a. "Glory to God in the highest." The angels rejoice over God's glory being restored by the birth of the divine Infant. They praise him for the gracious work of the Incarnation.

b. "And on earth peace to men." For our sake. To elevate us to the dignity of children of God, and to make us heirs of heaven, Jesus took flesh. Praise and thank him, and rejoice over your high dignity. Let us be "of good will," this being the condition under which we have received the promise of everlasting peace.

II. THE SHEPHERDS.

1. They heard the good tidings, because they were watching, whilst the citizens of Bethlehem slept. Be watchful that you may hear the voice and inspirations of God.

2. They believed. Childlike in heart and mind as they were, they found no obstacle to faith, no contradiction, in the words:—Saviour, Christ, Lord and child, swaddling cloths, manger,—but a profound mystery. Have you this childlike mind?

3. They came with haste. Of what avail is faith without obedience? Of what avail obedience, if you do not obey with haste? Whoever is in earnest in saving his soul, is not slothful.

III. MARY AND JOSEPH.

They are prostrate in adoration. Mary worships her infant child as her God and Saviour.

1. "Mary kept all these words." Take her for your model by keeping God's word, to be urged by it to good works, to be supported in temptations, to be consoled in tribulations.

2. "Pondering them in her heart." The word of God will not bring fruit, unless you ponder it in your heart and earnestly meditate on it. "O how have I loved thy law, O Lord! it is my meditation all the day." Ps. cxviii, 97. When a woman once called Mary blessed, Jesus said: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." Lk. xi, 28.

IV. THE DIVINE INFANT.

1. What do we see? *a.* With our bodily eyes a helpless child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger. *b.* With the eyes of our soul we see the eternal, incomprehensible Word, which from the beginning was with God and is God. Fall down on your knees, and adore the divine Child in humility of heart.

2. Why did Jesus come into this world as Son of man? To make us sons of God, if we be willing to accept this dignity. "As many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God," etc. II John i, 12, 13. The same Gospel speaks of such as receive him not. Wherefore the angels announced peace only to those who are "of good will." God is anxious for your salvation, the Church leads you to Christ. Consequently if you should not be saved, it will be through your own fault.

Peroration: Therefore be "of good will," show your willingness by performing good works, and your lot will be everlasting peace, for you will be numbered with the children of God for all eternity.

Bishop Sailer.

IV.

THREE-FOLD PEACE.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." This narrative indicates the two effects of our Saviour's birth, viz.: glory to God, and peace to men; which is a reasonable distribution, as

St. Bernard says. Yet there are men who are covetous after the glory that is reserved for God alone, not minding Isai. xlii, 8: "I will not give my glory to another." Such men are the slaves of pride. We say with David: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to thy name give glory." Ps. cxiii, 1. To us, O Lord, give the peace announced by the angels, and foretold by the prophet saying: "A child is born to us, * * * the Prince of peace." Isai. ix, 6. Indeed, Jesus Christ who was born when the world was in profound peace, has brought to us peace with God, with ourselves, and with our neighbor.

I. PEACE WITH GOD.

1. Being sinners, we were children of wrath; and, as such, in need of a mediator who was able to give satisfaction to divine justice, and bestow mercy on us.

a. We see in this child the divine mercy. "The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men." God entertained thoughts of peace for many centuries: "For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace." Jerem. xxix, 11; and yet he administered strict justice. To-day the grace of God has appeared, that is, Jesus Christ, who, being God and man, is grace and mercy itself.

b. At the same time we see in this child the divine justice, to which he gave full satisfaction. For, this infant being God, does penance of infinite value. St. Paul strikingly asserts this doctrine in the words: "God, indeed, was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." II Cor. v, 19.

In order to make our salvation sure, our penance must fill up the penance of Jesus Christ. Our penance should be similar to his, and should for this reason be earnest, and united with the merits of Jesus Christ.

II. PEACE WITH OURSELVES.

The peace of our heart is disturbed by pride, and inordinate attachment to earthly goods. The divine child teaches us to be humble and poor in spirit.

1. In the mystery of the Incarnation the Man-God teaches us humility, on which virtue not only the sanctity, but also the

happiness of our life depends. Are not our pride and ambition the cause of our being often deprived of inward peace? "Learn then from me" says Jesus, "to be humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." Humility far from being weakness of character, is the peculiar virtue of the strong, the virtue of the wise, the virtue of God, who by taking our flesh gave us an example of humility.

2. Another cause of our discord is our attachment to earthly goods, whilst the poor in spirit enjoy imperturbable peace of heart. Our Saviour teaches us this poverty of spirit by the stable, the manger, the swaddling clothes, etc. He invites poor shepherds and Wise Men of the East, who rejoice in parting with rich and precious gifts.

III. PEACE WITH ALL MEN.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men." Rom. xii, 18. What is the source of that peace? The endeavor to resemble Jesus Christ.

1. Although the Lord, he was obedient; although the Creator of heaven and earth, he became a little child; although possessing all riches, he became poor. Disinterestedness is the surest means of winning hearts. Destroy selfishness, and wars, dissensions, and lawsuits, will disappear.

2. Peace with our neighbour is also disturbed by an irascible temper. Jesus teaches us to be meek. Go unto the stable where you will find a God, who seeks you, when you are far from Him, thus exhorting you to be obliging to your neighbour in every respect.

Bourdaloue.

Sunday After Christmas.

III.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

“A child is born to us; and a son is given to us; and the government is upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace.” Isai. ix, 6. The Divine Infant in the manger, and in the arms of his Mother has ever been the object of the most tender affection. Christian art chose it as the subject of its favorite productions. In the vicinity of the grotto where the Salvation of the world was born, St. Jerome was often absorbed in prayer, shedding sweet tears of deep affection. St. Francis of Assisium recreated his seraphic spirit by meditating on the mysteries of the Sacred Childhood. Near Castrum Graecii, he built a grotto, placed in it a wooden manger, and invited the Christians to come there to adore the Divine Child. * * * What then is the mystery speaking to us so charmingly out of the childhood of Jesus? Why has Jesus Christ become a child?

PART I.

HE WANTED TO BE MADE TO THE LIKENESS OF HIS BRETHREN.

Philip. ii, 7.

1. The God-man, who descended upon earth for the sake of our redemption, desirous of being a link in the chain reaching up to Adam, wanted to be born, and become a child, like all the children of Adam. “It behoved him in all things to be made like to his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful High-Priest with God, to make a reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Heb. ii, 17. Therefore like all those who are destined to be members of the human family, he reposed in the womb of a human mother. He was born after the manner of the rest of men. He was subject to all the weaknesses of in-

fancy. Would our faith in the Divine Mercy be as vivid and as strong if our Saviour had not been the child of a human mother?

2. Mankind needed for their redemption not only one who took their guilt upon his shoulders, but who would be also a model and pattern for all men. A new life was to dawn on earth. A different race of higher morals was to flourish on our soil. Teaching by words only will not train man for virtue; the word must be accompanied by the example. To be our visible teacher by his holy example, the Son of man condemned himself to the usual stages of human existence up to mature age, so that when he had reached mature age he could summon all men: "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." John xiii, 15. As the Lord showed Moses on the mountain the pattern of the tabernacle he commanded him to build, so he sent his Son upon earth in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might show men the way to heaven, not by word only, but also by pattern and example. "Behold, says the prophet, I have given him for a witness to the people, for a leader and a master for the Gentiles." Is. lv, 4. Praise and adoration of this divine charity and infinite sacrifice, by which Jesus has become a child for us, be the first thanks of our hearts to the beautiful Infant who is the Son of God!

PART II.

THE SON OF GOD BECAME A CHILD IN ORDER TO HELP OUR
COLD HEARTS TO LOVE HIM.

1. The world knew no longer the commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." Mt. xxii, 37. Sin had extinguished the flame of divine love in the hearts of men. The Gentiles feared the wrath of their gods; they did not represent them to their mind as beneficent beings. Nor did even Israel know the charity of God. They said to Moses: "Speak thou to us, and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die." Ex. xxii, 19. It was the fear of God, so general amongst

the people, that made Manue say to his wife: "We shall certainly die, because we have seen God." Judges xiii, 22.

2. Love for God was to re-enter into the hearts of men. It is the voice of religion, and the sweetest voice which we hear in the words, "God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him." I John iv, 16. For this end God not only sent his Son to take away the sins of the world, which are an obstacle to charity; but he appeared in the form of a child, so that men could not but love him.

He appeared as a child, to banish all fear from the hearts of men. He concealed his Omnipotence in the hands of a child, his Omniscience and Wisdom in the eyes of a child, his eternal Justice in the heart of a child. His sanctity appears to us in the simplicity and meekness of a child. His kindness, longanimity and mercy were warranted to us in the sweet smile of a child. Not, as of old, has a devouring fire appeared to us (Is. xxxiii, 14), but a child in all his loveliness, and this child is our Emmanuel, God with us.

3. The Son of God has become not only a child, but a poor and suffering child. This child is disowned and despised by his own relations and people. There being no room for him in Bethlehem, he was laid in a manger. The child must flee into a foreign country. The mountains of Judea resound with the lamentation and mourning of mothers bewailing their children, who are slain for the sake of the child Jesus. The child has to return from Egypt, and is raised in poverty in the house of his parents. The child has chosen poverty and humiliation, suffering and contempt, that we might not resist his entreaties to love him in return.

4. Who could refuse to love such a God? The child's petitions are irresistible. A child in its sweetness and innocence must be loved. We are told that it was customary with some pagan nations, when a storm arose on the sea, to make a child lift up his innocent hands toward heaven, in order to appease the wrath of their gods. When Jacob was to meet his brother Esau, he hoped to reconcile him by the aspect of his children. Gen. xxxiii, 2.

5. Who then would not love this lovely and suffering child? "Oh! my Lord!" let us exclaim with St. Bernard, "little thou art, but lovely exceedingly." Or shall we, as his Jewish relations, through our sins disown the child? Is our sweet Jesus to hear from us that there is no more room, for him in our hearts, because they are overloaded with sins and vices? Or are we to persecute the child like Herod, crowning by our impenitence his head with thorns, piercing his tender hands with nails, scourging his sacred body, and piercing his innocent heart with a spear. "Let us love the baby-child; let us love him, let us return love for love, unlimited love for his infinite love." St. Francis the Seraph.

PART III.

JESUS CHRIST HAS BECOME A CHILD, THAT WE ALSO SHOULD
BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN.

Jesus had a predilection for little children. He caressed and blessed them. "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such." Mt. xix, 14; Cf. xi, 25, 26. He commands us to become like them: "Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." xviii, 3. The holy childhood of Jesus reminds us of the obligation imposed upon us to become as little children. What, then, are the conspicuous virtues of a child?

1. Humility. The child prefers his mother, though she be deformed, and the poorest of women, to a queen on the throne. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6. Pride has cast angels out of heaven. In the child Jesus we admire the perfection of humility. Is not this child the infinite God, who called heaven and earth into being, who at the very time, when he is carried about in the arms of his Blessed Mother, supports all by his strength? Truly, our Saviour had a good right to exhort us by saying: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls." Mt. xi, 29.

2. The heart of the child is innocent and free from passion. It is far from avarice, envy, and wrath. Let us return to the innocence of children. "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and dissimulations, and envies, and all detractions, as new-born infants, desire the rational milk without guile, that thereby you may grow unto salvation." I Pet. i, 2. "Brethren, do not become children in sense; but in malice be children, and in sense be perfect." I Cor. xiv, 20.

3. The heart of the child is full of charity and confidence. It is afraid of offending God, his parents, or teachers by the slightest disobedience. Holding the hand of father and mother, it knows no cares or solicitude. Return ye to the love of God, and put your confidence in Him who is your Father. The childhood of Jesus impresses on your mind the same doctrine.

Peroration: Let me, in conclusion, say a word to you, ye parents. The childhood of Jesus Christ must convince you more than any other arguments could, how precious before God are your innocent children. Jesus by becoming a child has sanctified infancy. You must know that in your own children you guard the child Jesus. Are your little ones not the brethren or sisters of the divine Babe, of our Heavenly Father's child? See ye that you do not scandalize one of your little ones, either by words or by actions. Educate your children and watch over them, that they may remain children, not in mind, but in malice. Lead them in time and regularly to our Catholic schools, they being the schools of God, because they are the schools of the Church, which received the commission to teach all nations. And all of us, let us learn from Jesus, how sweet it is to be a child, and to have the heart of a child, that so we may enter into life everlasting.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

DEATH IS NOT TO BE FEARED.

"Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace." Lk. ii 29. Behold, a man who far from fearing death, longs for it as a dear friend! What blessing does

this holy man find in death, to make it the object of his desire ? He finds in it the blessing which faith promises—a blessing so great, that it should make life unwelcome and death desirable. I know that every one of you fears death, and for what reason ? Because you look on it as the greatest evil. I know also that you would be thankful to him who would take away from you this fear of death. Now, then ! listen to me with attention : I will console you. For, I will show you that we have no reason to fear death, because from it no real evil, but only blessing, ensues.

1. The reason that might induce us to fear death, seems to be because death is a punishment for sin. If you speak of death, as it was before the Redemption by the Son of God, you are perfectly right. But if you mean death after it was conquered in consequence of the sacrifice on the Cross, I deny emphatically that it is justifiable to fear death. On the contrary, I say that to Christians death is a blessing to be longed for. Hear the reasons ! If I were to ask some one of you which was greater, the damage caused by Adam's sin, or the blessing bestowed on us in consequence of the Redemption by Jesus Christ, what would you answer ? Of course, that the blessing is far greater. You would not give any other answer, since Jesus Christ has not only repaired the damage caused by Adam's sin, but infinitely enriched us. You have heard the Exultet in Holy Week, when the spouse of Christ sings : "O happy guilt of Adam, which was the occasion of having so great a Redeemer !" Now, if this be true, what is the compensation for the damage caused by sin, since notwithstanding our Redemption by Jesus Christ, we are subject to so many hardships, afflictions and death, the most horrible of all afflictions ? I am to give a plain, and, I hope, satisfactory answer. If Adam had not sinned, we should have led a quiet life, free from tribulations, through many centuries ; and at last, without drinking the bitter chalice of death, we should have been received, body and soul, into heaven. Now hear the blessing by Jesus Christ. He would not deliver us from the afflictions and death caused by sin : but he has made them the means of obtain-

ing eternal happiness within a few years, which, without Adam's sin, we should only have obtained after a long, long sojourning on earth. Oh! if we could comprehend this blessing, how ardent would be our thanks! It is quite certain that the greatest punishment to the souls in Purgatory is the delay of the beatific vision. And should we not consider with the Apostle death as a gain? Such was the view the glorious martyr St. Ignatius took of death, when his mind was troubled with fear that the wild beasts selected to be his executioners, might lay aside their ferocity. "O dear death," said Blessed Catharine of Genoa, "why dost thou go to those who look on thee as the greatest evil? Why dost thou not come to me, who seek and call upon thee day and night?"

2. I hear somebody say, he fears death, because it robs him of his life and all earthly goods. Where is the traveler who would not fear to pass a road where he knows that he will certainly be robbed by highwaymen? The comparison is, however, lame. For the robbers impoverish the traveler, whilst death enriches us. If somebody should deprive you of your old coat, and replace it by a costly garment, would you fear such a robber? Is not death this kind of robber? We know from infallible revelation that death takes away temporal life, to replace it by eternal life; and that he despoils us of the miserable goods of this world, that we may gain the infinite good of heaven. St. Symphorosa exhorted one of her sons not to fear the dreadful torments that were afflicting him, saying: Raise up your eyes to heaven, remembering that death will not take your life, but exchange it for a far better life. If we take this view of death, the words of St. Paul will be applicable to us: "You receive with joy the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and permanent substance." Heb, x, 34.

3. The bitter separation of body and soul, and the subsequent lamentable condition of the body, appear to many sufficient motives for fearing death. But are we not assured by our holy religion that this same soul will return on the day of general resurrection, to be re-united with the same body? Besides,

death takes the soul out of a land full of misery, to transplant her into her new fatherland, where she will enjoy eternal peace and infinite delight in the embrace of her Heavenly Father, in the transporting society of the angels and Saints, her friends and brethren. True, your body will return to dust; but it will rise again. If some one would destroy your poor hut, to build you a magnificent palace instead, would you take such a benefactor for your enemy? This our benefactor is death.

4. The Reverend father, you say, is right, in so far as he speaks of a good and holy death. If we were sure of dying the death of the just, we should have no fear of death. I understand you; you no doubt assigned the strongest reason why death should be feared. Nevertheless, even this reason will not stand the test. What renders death an evil death? You answer, Sin. Then it is sin not death that is to be feared. "It follows, says St. Ambrose, that the bitterness does not originate from death, but from sin." "The sting of death is sin." I Cor. xv, 56. "Will you be, says St. Augustine, without fear respecting death? Live in the fear of God, live a virtuous life." Sinful life causes an evil death. Strange to say, all men fear death as the greatest calamity; but few fear an evil life, the origin of an evil death. All means are employed to keep off death, though everyone knows death to be inevitable; but very little is done to keep off an evil death, though it is placed in our power to prevent this greatest of calamities.

5. You have yet another evasion left. You say you fear death on account of the *uncertainty* as to whether or not you will die an evil death. What is the truth about this uncertainty? Do you suppose that a good and happy death is a game of hazard? Far from it. There is an uncertainty respecting the just man, and an uncertainty respecting the sinner. The just man enjoys no absolute certainty, although he is morally certain of dying a happy death, for which reason his mind is not unquiet. The uncertainty of the sinner on the contrary is terrifying, because founded on the exceedingly great probability of dying the death of the sinner, of which it is written: "The death of the evil is

very evil." Ps. xxxiii, 22. (Parables of the foolish virgins and of the sterile fig tree.) Respecting those who live in the fear of God, it is written: "With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed." Eccles. i, 13. Pharaoh's chief butler and his chief baker were in the same dungeon with Joseph of Egypt. How different must have been the feelings with which they saw the day approach, when they were to leave the dungeon, the one to be restored to his former position, the other to have his head cut off by Pharaoh! In like manner the impenitent sinner fears the day when he has to leave the dungeon of his body; the innocent and penitent sinner, whom God has promised eternal happiness, looks forward for this day with joyfulness, saying with the Psalmist: "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name" (Ps. cxli, 8), and with the Apostle: "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." Philip. i, 23.

If you object that many, after a virtuous life, died the death of the reprobate, I deny that a truly virtuous man, ever met that final fate. I never found one instance either in Holy Scripture, in the works of the Holy Fathers, nor in other reliable books.

6. There is yet another cause for which death is said to be dreadful: I mean the perilous struggle with the devil. I reply: If you speak of those who were all their lives in the habit of yielding to the attacks of the hellish fiend, I am more than willing to concede that they have sufficient reason to fear death. If you speak of those who are wont to resist his temptations, I concede that they have sometimes a dreadful final struggle with the reprobate angels, but I deny that one of them ever succumbed in this combat. The servant of Eliseus the Prophet rising early, went out and saw an army round about the city, and horses and chariots, and he told the man of God, saying: "Alas! alas! alas, my lord; what shall we do?" (The king of the Syrians had sent the strength of an army to capture the Prophet). Eliseus answered: "Fear not: there are more with us than with them;" and, after a short prayer, he showed him the heavenly army sent by God to his assistance. IV Kings vi, 15, etc. In the same

way every man of God is protected in his last struggle by the Angels and Saints. "The Lord is my helper: and I will look over my enemies." Ps. cxvii, 7. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able." I Cor. x, 13. It is true that some saintly persons have felt fear and manifested great anguish at the approach of death. But mind! they were very few when compared with the thousands of holy persons who have died with a smile on their mouths and their hearts cheerful. God permitted such things to happen, to warn the sinners. Besides, this fear was of very short duration; as amongst many others, was the case with St. Hilarion who, terrified for a few moments by a dark cloud covering his mind, was suddenly consoled by an inner inspiration, so as to address his soul in the following words: "Go forth, my soul; why fearest thou? Thou hast served Jesus Christ, it is now near seventy years; and yet thou fearest death?" Thus he quietly expired in the Lord.

Peroration: Jesus Christ is the conqueror of death. To keep far off the fear of death, strive for the friendship of Jesus, by receiving worthily his body and blood in the Holy Eucharist, whenever opportunity is offered. Thus you take your Saviour not merely into your arms, but also into your heart; and at the last struggling hour you will confidently say with Simeon: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation."

John Baptist Campadelli.

New Year's Day.

' III.

REFLECTIONS ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

When the clock struck twelve last night, it reminded us of the time that is past, and of the time to come. Isaias the Prophet (xxi, 11) speaks of a watchman who was asked: "Watchman, what of the night?" Mark his answer. He said: "The morning cometh, also the night." This watchman admonishes us to regard two times: the morning, that is the time to come, and the night that is the time past. In accordance therewith the Holy Ghost exhorts us: "Remember what things have come before thee, and what shall come after thee: this sentence is from the Lord upon all flesh." Eccles. xli, 5. We are reminded of the same warning by the very name January, which is derived from the pagan God named Janus, who was represented by pictures as being double faced. With one face he looked forward into the future, with the other he looked back upon the past. We are emigrants who sail into a new country. Let us look backward and forward, let us look back on the way we have made, let us look forward to see the way we have yet before us.

PART I.

RETROSPECT OF THE PAST.

I. How much of our journey have we traversed? How far off is our childhood, our boyhood, our youth? Where is our active age? We passed it long ago. Is it not as if it were yesterday, when you saw his little daughter on the lap of your then happy neighbor, the same daughter who is now herself mother of children? When did your hair turn gray? Behold, the thief who comes unnoticed at night and breaks the house open. Lk. xii, 39. Truly we must say with Job: "My days have been swifter than a post. They have passed by as ships carrying fruits, as an eagle flying to the prey." ix, 25 26. Is it not strange

that from the past we have not learnt, that our days to come will pass by with the same swiftness of the wind? "Daily we die, daily we change, and still we seem to believe that we shall live for ever?" St. Jerome.

II. How many are the things we have seen? Many towns and cities, etc. You have possessed many houses, acres of land, etc. You have read many newspapers and books. What good has it done you? Not more than a ship that sailed by, at which you cast one glance. How true is the warning of the Apostle: "They who use this world, be as if they used it not: for the figure of this world passeth away." I Cor. vii, 31. King David expresses the same by an appropriate similitude. Will you hear to what he compares our years? To a spider. "Our years shall be considered as a spider's web." Ps. lxxxix, 9. "As the spider, sending forth threads, moves up and down, and spins all day long, the labor being great, but the result of no consequence; thus it is with human life." St. Jerome. What does the spider effect by its incessant labor? It catches flies. And how easily is its web destroyed? Man gains little by hunting after earthly things, as riches, honour. And they are so easily lost, most assuredly by death. Woe to those who have squandered the precious years of their life in useless occupations?

III. Where are our companions and those who were of the same age as ourselves? Alas! the sea demands its victims. Most of them perished on the ocean of this life. (Divers causes of death.) Your parents, grandparents, etc., are gone. You, being a tree of one year, which may be soon cut down also, are left alone. They all had to appear before the judgment seat; they have heard their sentence, and have entered the house of eternity. Their possessions are left here on earth. They wait for you, and it will soon be your turn. The Psalmist said: "I thought upon the days of old; and I had in my mind the eternal years." Ps. lxxvi, 6. Let us act in like manner.

IV. Who are those that follow us? Friends or foes? Our works follow us. "Their works follow them." Apoc. xiv, 13. If they are good works, they will defend us; if bad, they will

ruin us. Well then, are our works as if they were picaroons, persecuting us? Moses threatened his people: "Know ye that your sin shall overtake you?" (Numb. xxxii, 23.) as the officer of justice overtakes the thief, as the pirate overtakes the ship of which he is in chase, so sin will overtake us. O my God and Lord! May I escape this disaster! "I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul." Isai. xxxviii, 15. I will recount them, so as to forget none of my sins, which I will lay before the tribunal of mercy thou hast established here on earth, in the bitterness of my soul.

PART II.

GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE.

I. The part of our journey we have yet to make. God commanded Moses, when death was approaching, to go up into the mountain Abarim (that is to say, of passages, for the passage into the Promised Land was over the mountain), and to see the land of Chanaan, and to die in the mountain. Deut. xxxii. Let us to-day do the same. Let us, by meditating on death, go up into the mountain Abarim, and see how great is the distance from the land of Chanaan. Let us cast a glance at the Promised Land, at its mansions and inhabitants. King David prayed to God: "O Lord, make me know my end, and what is the number of my days, that I may know what is wanting to me." Ps. xxxviii, 5. And he goes on: "Behold, thou hast made my days measurable." Our days are so few, that they may be easily measured. Perhaps so few that you may die this very year, or even this present month. Let the shortness of your days be an admonition for you to scrutinize the state of your conscience, that you may know what is wanting to you.

II. Are we in the right path? The sinner who has deviated from the right path is admonished by God through his Prophet Jeremias: "Set thee up a watch-tower, make to thee bitterness; direct thy heart into the right way." Jerem. xxxi, 21. If you desire to direct your steps to the land of everlasting happiness, survey your life from a watch-tower, *i. e.*, sur-

vey your actions with the word of revealed truth, in order to know how far you are out of the track of Christian morality; and that you may direct your heart into the right way, make to you bitterness, that is to say, do penance. "I have thought on my ways, and turned my feet into thy testimonies." Ps cxviii, 59. You will not be so foolish as to give up your vessel to the winds. Put your hands to work, and look up to the Polar Star, which is the honor of God, and the doctrine and example of Christ; this star will never lead you astray. * * * For this object it is necessary to look at the compass, i. e., our conscience, so as to know whether your heart is steering toward heaven or toward the earth.

III. We must always be on the look-out, in order to discover whether there are enemies in sight, or cliffs and lurking rocks. The old poets describe Ulysses, on passing the Siren as having filled with wax the ears of his companions, and fastened himself to the mast, so as not to be plunged into peril in consequence of the sweet and flattering Siren-song. We are to hear in this ensuing year many a charming siren-song. Keep your ears closed by a firm resolution, and cling to the tree of the cross, saying with the Apostle: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross." Gal. ii, 19. And take the advice of St. Peter: "Be prudent, and watch in prayers." Peter knew the cause of his disastrous shipwreck to have been his not having complied with the exhortation of his Master: "Arise, pray, lest you enter into temptation. Lk. xxii, 46."

IV. How are we to make the port of death at last? The helmsman governs his ship, sitting at the stern, not at the head. Thus we must always keep before our eyes the end of our life. Such a wise steerman was Isaac the Patriarch. For he said to his son: "Thou seest that I am old, and know not the day of my death." Gen. xxvii, 2. Still he lived forty-three years more. Such a helmsman was St. Anthony, the Patriarch of monks. He once assembled his brethren, entreating them earnestly to consider every new day as the last of their life, thus following the example of St. Paul, who said: "I die daily." I Cor. xv, 31.

Peroration: If we would remember death, how great would be our fear of God; how useful our thoughts, how great our contempt of temporal things! Let us on the first day of the New Year reflect on how we may reach its end in safety.

M. Faber.

IV.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

“After eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised, his name was called Jesus.” Lk. ii, 21. The life of our Saviour is full of the most profound and sacred mysteries. This day is devoted to the remembrance of one of them. The Evangelist expresses it in the words: “After eight days were accomplished, the child should be circumcised.” The Circumcision of our Saviour be then the subject of the present sermon.

PART I.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD IS A STUPENDOUS MYSTERY.

1. The infinitely majestic God appears in humbleness. The child presented to us is the consubstantial Son of the Heavenly Father; is the eternal, infinite Majesty. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and of his greatness there is no end.” Ps. cxliv, 3. To-day he appears as a child, as the child of a poor mother. True, hosts of angels surround him invisibly, yet externally nothing but humbleness is seen. No crown, no purple, not one sign of Divine Majesty. * * * Does it not excite our admiration?

2. The all-powerful God in weakness. Being true God, Jesus Christ possesses an unlimited power. “For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and in him.” Col. i, 16. This

infinitely powerful God appears to-day as a child, in weakness, carried in the arms of his mother. Stupendous mystery!

3. The Holy of Holies appears as a sinner. Jesus Christ is the source of all sanctity. He is the "High-Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens." Heb. vii, 26. This same God appears to-day as a sinner! "The child should be circumcised." "By submitting to the law of Circumcision, Jesus appears as a sinner, this law having been made only for sinners." St. Bernard. Thus "he was made a curse for us." Gal. iii, 13. St. Bernard goes so far as to say: "If the Father could deny his Son, he would not have acknowledged him under this shape of sin." Is it not stupendous?

Surely we should bow before the miraculous ways of Providence, leading to our salvation, and frequently reflect on them with tender affections!

PART II.

A MYSTERY FULL OF GRACE.

1. *On the Part of Christ*, Circumcision was the work of his purest affection for us.

a. He was under no obligation of being circumcised, sin being the deed of man, and therefore to be atoned for by men.

b. What Christ has done, was done by his magnanimity. "He was offered because it was his own free will" (Is. liii, 7) may be said of the sacrifice of Circumcision, as well as of the sacrifice of the Cross.

2. *In regard to mankind*, it was a work of perfect satisfaction:

a. The first great expiatory sacrifice, which Christ offered for mankind. In themselves the sufferings of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem were an atonement for the sins of the whole world. But it was decreed by God that by blood atonement should be made. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. iv, 22. Since Jesus Christ offered up the first-

lings of his precious blood, by being circumcised, circumcision was his first great expiatory sacrifice.

b. It implied the sacrifice on the cross.

According to the divine decree, the Sacrifice atoning for the sins of the world was to be made on the Cross, and to be completed with the shedding of the last drop of his blood. And by his circumcision Christ consecrated himself to the death on the Cross. For St. Paul says: "I testify to every man that circumcise himself, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Gal. v, 3. This whole law was to Christ nothing less than his dying on the Cross. "By the acceptance of Circumcision Christ contracted to die." St. Augustine.

From this it follows that Circumcision was a work of greatest satisfaction for sinful man, and that by it an unlimited measure of grace was poured down upon men. Oh! let us praise the eternal charity that hath done great things to us. The "mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever." Ps. lxxxviii, 2.

PART III.

CIRCUMCISION IS AN INSTRUCTIVE MYSTERY.

1. It inculcates the great value of our souls. The blood of the God-man is shed to-day for the salvation of our souls. "You are bought with a great price." I Cor. vi, 20. Therefore do not sell your soul, even not at the rate of all the treasures and joys of the world. Or, how could you answer before the judgment seat of your Saviour for having sold the most precious pearl for a handful of dust?

2. It inculcates the necessity of our spiritual circumcision. Christ is our model. "Christ has suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps." I Pet. ii, 21. As he was circumcised "outwardly in the flesh," so we should share in the "circumcision of the heart, in the spirit." Rom ii, 28. He himself enjoined this duty of spiritual circumcision: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." Mt. xvi,

24. "If thy right eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out."
Mt. v. 29.

Peroration: The circumcision in spirit, which you are resolved to make in your heart, consists in cutting off from your soul (1) excessive attachment to earthly possessions. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Mt. vi, 19. (2) The extravagant attachment to creatures. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." Mt. x, 37. (3) The inclination for worldly joys. "Love not the world, nor those things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him," etc. I John ii, 15. (4) Inordinate self-love and pride. "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which we ought to do." Lk. xvii, 10. "Mortify, therefore, your members, which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust," etc. Col. iii, 5. "Put on the new man." v. 10.

Joseph Schuen.

Sunday After New Year's Day.

III. OF RELAPSE INTO SIN.

I hope to God the days of Advent have been to every one of you days of penance, and Christmas time, a time of reconciliation with Jesus Christ. Thus we no longer gave allegiance to the kingdom of Herod; the executioner Sin had nothing to require of us; God and the soul were secured to us. But alas! how few are those who would not return and who, lose from malice or levity, the obtained grace by relapsing into the forsaken vices! How many, who, with the tears of repentance yet in their eyes, the Saviour in their hearts in the swaddling clothes of good resolutions, do fall again into sin, becoming enslaved to Herod's son, that is to say, the vicious habit caused by sin. Joseph "was afraid to go thither," where peril had once threatened him; and after his example we should be afraid to relapse into sin. For this end let us reflect on the principal causes of relapse, and the consequences thereof.

PART I.

THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF RELAPSE.

1. The first cause is, because the sinner was not justified at all, for want of the necessary disposition.

a. Disposition is sometimes insufficient for want of self-knowledge. How much levity is sometimes displayed by Christians in examining their conscience! Is it astonishing that no cure is effected when the disease is unknown? A cure is the less probable, as due confession is impossible.

b. More frequently the disposition is insufficient in consequence of the insufficiency of contrition. With many, it is the mere work of the lips, or a merely natural sorrow on account of merely human motives, and therefore like them changeable; frequently not springing from the love of God, from which arises the only disposition which fits a man for justification. The action

with its bitter fruits is often hated, but the sweet fruits are relished. One sin is hated, another cherished. Without true contrition no conversion, no perseverance, every good resolve having no foundation to support it.

Relapser ! examine yourself, if you have ever had a proper disposition, if you ever arose from sin, being received in grace by God. It is time to indemnify your defrauded soul.

2. The second cause, even with regard to the just, is too great self-confidence.

a It springs from underrating the strength and pertinacity of our enemies. "Like robbers the evil spirits beleaguer our ways of life." St. Gregory. With conversion the peril has not vanished, the enemy not being crushed. Hell in alliance with the world combats the more ferociously and cunningly. The flesh maintains its claims. Therefore : "Be sober and watch." I Pet. v, 8.

b. It springs further from overrating our own strength. "I will not fear what flesh can do against me." Ps. lv, 5. "See, therefore, brethren, how you walk (circumspectly,) not as unwise." Eph. v, 15. "A man's enemies shall be they of his own household" (his own inclinations).

3. The third cause is the cooling of the first zeal, as is manifested :

a. By growing indifferent as to little things, out of laziness, self-love, or excessive desire of pleasing others. The smallest sin is water poured on the love of God burning in your hearts, is a bridge to mortal sin. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." Eccles. xix, 1.

b. By growing careless in employing the means of grace. Neglecting the attendance at divine service, praying rarely and without devotion, carelessness in receiving the Holy Sacraments, deprive the soul of grace, light, consolation, and strength, so that she dies from her own misery. Grace is oil, and wine, shield, and staff, in the path of virtue. Be solicitous to acquire, preserve, and protect grace.

PART II.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF RELAPSE.

1. If every sin is an object of divine vengeance, still more so is relapse.

a. For it is an outrage upon Jesus Christ. What an outrage to befoul the garment of grace dyed in his precious blood, to give the Lord the kiss of Judas, to pierce through his tender heart ardent with love, to break the holy covenant, to abuse his grace, to give him up to Herod !

b. It is a serious injury to the cause of religion. Its enemies see the confessionals frequented, and yet Christians continually follow the triumphal car of the devil and the spirit of the age, which is the devil's creation. They despise the Church and her means of grace. "A foolish son is the sorrow of his mother." Prov. x, 1. "The enemies have seen her, and have mocked at her Sabbaths." Lament. i, 7.

2. He who is guilty of relapse will surely be lost.

a. God takes his grace from him. He who commanded his ministers : "Give not that which is holy to dogs ; neither cast ye your pearls before swine" Mt. vii, 6, acts no doubt according to his own rule. "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked." Gal. vi, 7. Woe, woe, if the angels of grace leave the temple, and the " princely spirit " flees.

b. For total ruin will succeed the abomination of desolation in consequence of obduracy. "Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them." Isai. vi, 10. The resolutely vicious sinner is anyhow aware of his misery. The relapsed, on the contrary, covers his misery with certain religious practices, ineffectual absolutions, and remains with his eyes closed, in the state of perdition, sealing it with final obduracy : he regards no longer the sin which he has oftentimes committed and oftentimes confessed. He lives and dies without being sorry for his sins.

Peroration: How dreadful are these consequences! How worthy of our attention! Therefore: "My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more * * * All (reiterated) iniquity is like a two-edged sword; there is no remedy for the wound thereof." Eccles. xxi, 1, 4.

Kallegari.

IV.

THE HOUSE AT NAZARETH.

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth." Mt. ii, 23. When Herod, the cruel tyrant, was dead, God sent an angel to St. Joseph in Egypt, admonishing him to return to his own country. "Rise, and take the child, and his mother, and go into the land of Israel." Mt. ii, 20. And Joseph "rising up, took the child, and his mother, and came into the land of Israel." When he had passed the boundaries of the land of Israel, being warned, he retired into the parts of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a small town called Nazareth, with his virgin bride and the Son of God for many years. * * * This house at Nazareth, where the Holy Family dwelt, let it be the subject of our attention and meditation.

PART I.

THE HOUSE AT NAZARETH IS A MODEL FOR EACH CHRISTIAN HOUSE.

1. It was a *house of prayer*.

a. There never was a spot on earth whence so ardent prayer ascended into heaven, as from the house of Nazareth, There the holiest souls poured out their prayers before the Lord. The holy angels looked in rapture from the heights of heaven down upon them.

b. In every Christian house prayer should be the first object of solicitude, it being urgently inculcated on us by Almighty God. "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always." Eccles. xviii, 22. "Watch ye, praying at all times." Lk. xxi, 35. "In

every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God." Phlp. iv, 7. O that prayers would be said regularly in every household! Pray in the morning, at meals, in the evening. (Admonition to parents to pray with their children.)

2. It was a house of *the fear of God*.

a. In the house of Nazareth dwelt three holy persons filled with the fear of God, such as the world never beheld: Jesus who devoted to the eternal Father every sigh of his heart, every word of his lips; the Immaculate Virgin, and her holy spouse who walked day and night in the remembrance of God.

b. Every Christian household should excel in the fear of God. "Fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, and with your whole heart." I Kings xii, 24. "Fear God" I Pet. ii, 17. Under the roof where the fear of God prevails, no bad action is committed, no bad word is heard. Place the Crucifix on a conspicuous place in your room and force not the Crucified to be a witness of excuses.

3. It was a *house of charity*.

a. Who is sufficient to depict the charity embellishing the house at Nazareth! How tender and holy were the affections between Joseph and Mary. How burning were their flames of charity to Jesus!—And Jesus!

b. Every Christian house should be permeated with true charity. "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." John xv, 12. Charity of husband and wife, of brothers and sisters. Happy the house when this charity rules! All crosses are carried with ease, all tears are sweetened. God pours out his blessing upon such a house, and protecting angels hover about it. How melancholy is the sight of the house, where charity is wanting!

4. It was a house of *contentedness*.

a. The house at Nazareth knew of no costly furniture, no splendid rooms, no exquisite meals. All was simple, nay austere. And the inhabitants of this house were well content with little.

b. There should be contentedness in every house. "Be con-

tented with little instead of much." Eccles. xxix, 29. In a house where everything is demanded in profusion, and complaints are heard on every trival occasion, the spirit of Christ does not dwell. But when the members of the family are content with what God gives, though it be plain raiment, and scanty food, and when, for that little, daily thanks are offered up to the Heavenly Father, there dwells the spirit of Christ, and there you find the enjoyment of greater happiness than in princely palaces. "The life of the laborer who is content with what he hath, shall be sweet." Eccles. xl, 18 * * *

5. It was a *house of beneficence*.

a. The Holy Family were poor, earning their daily bread by the work of their hands. * * * Nevertheless their house was a harbor and consolation to the needy.

b. Beneficence will be met with in every Christian house. "Son, defraud not the poor of alms; and turn not away thy eyes from the poor." Eccles. iv, 1. "Give to him that asketh of thee." Mt. v, 42. "Nothing recommends a Christian more than compassion." St. Ambrose. Therefore shut not your door to the needy. You will find something to comfort him with, if you have a compassionate heart. But times are hard, the income small, the poor ungrateful. Christian charity gives alms nevertheless, knowing that, if the thanks of the world are not received, the reward is doubled by God. "Though the poor were a great sinner, but were in want of the necessary nourishment, we should give him to eat." St. Augustine.

PART II.

THE HOUSE AT NAZARETH A CONSOLATION TO EVERY CHRISTIAN HOUSE.

1. *Respecting the care for our daily bread.*

a. Labor in every house.

"Thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands." Ps. cxxvii, 2. "God has created man for labor and according to this purpose formed his limbs." St. Chrysostom. Accordingly you observe labor to be the general allotment of man. "Sweat of thy face."

Gen. iii, 19. "The burden of the day and the heats." Mt. xx, 12. How arduous a task is it to many fathers of families to earn a living for their dear ones!

b. Labor in the house at Nazareth.

Jesus worked, Joseph and Mary work. Is it not a great consolation to us in our labors, to represent to ourselves the Son of the Most High, his Virgin Mother and his pious foster-father working for their daily bread? Do you clearly perceive that labor is exceedingly acceptable to God?

2. Respecting the inevitable afflictions in life.

a. Afflictions in every house.

"Great labour is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam." Eccles. xl, 1. Poverty. Sickness. Accidents. Calumny. Mournful casualties.

b. Afflictions in the house at Nazareth.

Though being the delight of heaven, it had to taste the cup of bitterness. "Many are the tribulations of the just." If sadness and affliction visit your house, remember the holiest house upon which the sun was ever shining, and reflect that it was not exempt from tribulations.

Joseph Schuen.

Epiphany.

III.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FEAST.

“There came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying : “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” Mt. ii, 1. This festival day is called Epiphany, which means manifestation. Whilst Jesus Christ appeared to the Jews on Christmas Day, he manifested himself to the Gentiles on this day, when he called upon the Wise Men to adore him, they being the firstlings of heathen nations. Nearly all Christians being the offspring of heathen forefathers, we find it natural that this festival day is celebrated with great splendor throughout Christendom, particularly in Rome, once the metropolis of paganism, now the metropolis of the Christian world. To give you the necessary information on this festivity, I will explain to you its significance in itself, and with respect to us.

PART I.

ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN ITSELF.

On the day of Epiphany we celebrate the manifestation of Jesus Christ as God, particularly to the heathens, so that we are reminded of the words of St. John : “We saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John i, 14.

1. There are three conspicuous events by which, in his retired life, and at the inauguration of his public life, Jesus Christ has manifested his divinity and dignity as the Messiah ; the apparition of the miraculous star, his being baptized by John the Baptist in the waters of the river of Jordan, and his first miracle at the nuptials of Cana.

a. The miraculous star leads the Wise Men to Jerusalem, and when upon their inquiry, where is he that is born King of the Jews, they had received the answer that Christ should be born in Bethlehem of Juda, “behold the star, which they had

seen in the East, went before them, until it came and stood over where the child was." And entering into the house, they find the divine child, and enlightened by the Holy Ghost, they believe this child to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Therefore, falling down, they adored him, and offered him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Thus the prophecy of the royal Prophet was fulfilled: "Before him the Æthiopians shall fall down; the kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents; the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts." Ps. lxxi, 9.

b. When Jesus Christ was baptized, portentous signs appeared. "Behold the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, as a dove, and coming upon him. And, behold, a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mt. iii. 16. This is another manifestation, or Epiphany, the Father and the Holy Ghost bearing testimony to his being the Son of God.

c. The third event was the first miracle which Jesus wrought, changing water into wine. This was another manifestation of his divinity. Therefore St. John remarks: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory; and his Disciples believed in him." Jchn ii, 11.

The Church celebrates these three manifestations on this day of Epiphany, whereby she follows the early observances of Christianity, as St. Augustine testifies.

2. By these three events Jesus Christ manifested himself in his threefold dignity: as King, High-Priest, and Prophet. The Wise Men, guided by the star, saw in him the God-sent King and Saviour of the world. By changing water into wine, Jesus Christ foreshadowed the Holy Sacrifice on our altars, where he changes bread and wine into his body and blood, thus manifesting himself as "High-Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Heb. vi, 20. Jesus Christ is our prophet or teacher: "This is the prophet indeed, that is to come into the world." John vi, 14. As prophet he appeared

at his baptism. For the Holy Ghost descended down upon him, bearing testimony of the spirit of truth abiding in him. And the Father testified that Jesus was his beloved Son whom mankind should hear.

Thus Epiphany, being the manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles, may be justly called the continuation of Christmas, and the manifestation of the three offices he is invested with, to accomplish the Redemption of all mankind.

PART II.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FESTIVITY WITH REGARD TO US.

1. Epiphany is to us a day of thanksgiving. For it reminds us of our calling to the Christian faith. Of the one thousand millions inhabitants of the globe, there are yet eight hundred millions in the fetters of idolatry or heresy. But you have been called by God from your infancy to walk in the light of faith. Is not this a grace, for which we should daily thank our God? Oh! be thankful then, make frequent acts of faith, protesting before heaven and earth that you firmly believe whatever the Holy Church proposes you to believe, being resolved to live and die in this faith. Prove yourselves worthy of your Christian ancestors!

2. This festival day reminds us of our threefold duty resulting from the threefold dignity of Jesus Christ.

a. Jesus Christ is our *King*. He governs His Church through his ministers, the Pope and bishops. To them he said: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." Lk. x, 16. Therefore it is not usurping power, when the pastors of the Church demand obedience in all things relative to the salvation of your souls. Oh! protect yourselves from the contamination of the spirit of the times which raises itself up against the Church and Revelation. "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Mt. xviii, 17.

b. Jesus Christ is our *High-Priest*. The means of grace, instituted for us, are principally the Holy Sacrifice and the Holy

Sacraments. The Sacrifice of the altar is the unbloody renewal of the bloody sacrifice on the Cross. The holy Sacraments are the channels through which the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass come upon us. By means of them we are either born again to be children of God, and heirs of heaven, or the marriage garment of sanctifying grace is embellished in our soul. Be thankful by attending Holy Mass, whenever opportunity is offered, and by receiving frequently the Holy Sacraments of Penance, and of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

c. Jesus Christ is our *prophet* by word and example. He informed us of our relation to God, of our sublime destiny, of our Redemption. His first precept is the love of God and of all men. He taught us virtues before unknown to the world, such as humility, mortification of the flesh, contempt of temporal goods, love of our enemy, etc. And all his doctrines were corroborated by his own example, so that he could truly say: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii, 12. Oh! how happy would men be, even in this world, would they conform their morals to the doctrine and example of Jesus Christ!

Peroration: The Wise Men were possessed of the true wisdom, for they sought the light that is come into this world, and despised the gainsaying of the world. For their reward they enjoy now the vision of the Father whose star they followed, the vision of the Son whom they adored, although in a condition of the most abject humbleness themselves, in the vision of the Holy Ghost, to whose inspirations they listened. Do you in like manner. Follow the Father's star, the dictates of your conscience, which will lead you along the right way to the eternal Jerusalem. Adore the Son under the humble form of bread, and embrace the Divine Infant by Holy Communion. Follow the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, by believing the revelation as proposed by the Church, whose vivifying spirit the Holy Ghost is, and by not preventing him from transferring your soul unto the figure of the soul of Jesus Christ.

J. E. Zollner.

IV.

JESUS CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

“Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem : for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” Js. lx, 1, 2. The above prophecy may be well accommodated to the Lord’s Epiphany, since by the light of the Star the firstlings were called to Christ, the light of the world.

I. DARKNESS OF PAGANISM.

Whilst the Lord had chosen one nation to be the guardian of his Revelations, all the other nations, our forefathers included, were buried in the darkness of paganism.

1. Nature of paganism.

a. Its origin. “When they had known God, they have not glorified him as God, nor gave thanks : but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts was darkened.” Rom. i, 21. Thus sin turns man away from God, and blinds his understanding. Paganism is the necessary consequence of sin and vice.

b. Its peculiar nature. “They changed the likeness of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things.” Rom. i, 22. Wisd. xiii, 1–3. What an exchange !

c. Its connection with the infernal powers. “All the gods of the Gentiles are devils.” Ps. xlv, 5. It cannot be disputed that the powers of darkness were the authors of superstition, sorcery, and oracles connected with idolatry ; and true notions of God and of virtue were lost.

2. Its monstrous consequences. “As they liked not to have God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to those things which are not convenient. Being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication,” etc. Rom. i, 28, Instead of delineating to you all kinds of cruelty, injustice, and

cunning lust, I will only point out three characteristic features of paganism.

a. Human sacrifices. A dreadful instance is given IV Kings iii, 27. When the King of Moab could not prevail against the King of Edom, "he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall." Think of the Moloch sacrifice; of the many human victims slaughtered by the gladiators fighting for the entertainment of the Greek and Roman peoples; of the horrible sacrifices of the Mexicans who offered annually at least 20,000 men in the midst of wars, or, when there was not a sufficient number of captives, slaughtered their own children.

b. Slavery in its most cruel shape. The master had absolute power over his slave, the latter being considered an article of trade, sold in the market, ill-treated or even killed for mere amusement.

c. Polygamy. The dignity of the woman trampled under foot, woman treated as a slave; no equality between man and wife, no family life, no true education.

The darker the shadows of paganism, the brighter shines

II. THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANITY.

Amongst the many blessings of this new star of Christianity we mention :

1. Pure worship of God :

a. Pure notions of God and his perfections; of man's dignity and destiny; of true virtue and its everlasting reward. How thankful we should be remembering the wretched condition of the poor Gentiles!

b. Pure divine service : Prayer in spirit and truth; the sublime and efficacious sacrifice of the Mass; Holy Sacraments conferring consolation, strength and sanctity. Admirable ceremonies! What a contrast to the abominable feasts of the gods!

2. Sanctification of human society. All conditions of life are ennobled by sacraments and blessings. Besides, Christianity maintains in opposition to paganism :

a. Equality of all men before God. We are children of one Father and brethren and sisters to one another. Wherever the spirit of Christianity prevailed, the hardness of slavery was mitigated, and abolished by degrees, and numerous institutions of Christian charity were established.

b. Woman's dignity, secured by social equality with her husband, by monogamy, and the seal of the Sacrament of matrimony.

Peroration: Let us, like the Wise Men, open our spiritual eyes to the light that appeared to us by Christianity. Let us help others to enjoy the same beneficial star by supporting the missionaries and missionary institutions. Beware of modern paganism in the shape of infidelity, self-made idols and slavery of 'sin, that the Words of Scripture may not be applicable to us: "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

Herbst.

First Sunday After Epiphany.

III.

LOSS OF GOD.

“The child Jesus remained in Jerusalem ; and his parents knew it not.” Lk. ii, 32. Joseph and Mary lost the Divine Child * * * We often sustain a similar loss. It is an article of faith that God abides in the heart of man in an admirable and mysterious way. “If any one love me, my Father will love him.” John xiv, 23. “Know you not that your members are a temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you ?” I Cor. vi, 19. At the very moment when man becomes guilty of mortal sin, this gracious union between God and the soul is dissolved. God, leaving his heart, is lost to him. Let me call your attention to the lamentable loss which everyone of us is liable to maintain.

PART I.

IT IS THE GREATEST LOSS.

1. *He who loses God, loses the supreme good.*

The loss of property, of health, of honor, are no doubt great losses. Esau having lost his birthright “roared out with a great cry.” Gen. xxvii. Job sustained the terrible loss of his property and children. Job i. Manasses lost crown and freedom. II Par. xxxiii. Infinitely greater is the loss of God, it being the loss of the supreme good. “One is good, God.” Mt. xix, 17. “None is good but God alone.” Lk. xviii, 19. What is the whole world, and all its goods, when compared with the sovereign good? Less than dust.

2. *With the loss of the supreme good, man loses all other goods.*

a. *Sanctifying grace.* “In consequence of any mortal sin the obtained grace of justification is lost.” Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. Cp. 15.

b. *All supernatural merits.* “If the just man turn himself away from his justice, all his justices which he has done, shall

not be remembered." Ezech. xviii, 24. "If any one remaineth not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither." John xv, 6.

c. The inheritance of heaven. While God abides in our soul, she has a claim to the heavenly crown. "If sons, heirs also : heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii, 17. With the loss of God this claim is forfeited. We repeatedly read in Holy Scripture, that to the sinner heaven is lost. "The Angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." Mt. xiii, 49. "Know you not that the unjust shall possess the kingdom of God?" I Cor vi, 7.

d. Inner peace of heart. "Know thou, and see, that it is an evil and bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God." Jerem. ii, 10. God alone is powerful to give peace to the human soul. When the prince of peace has left man's heart all peace is lost. If man should partake of all joys the world can afford, they are but unreal and unsubstantial joys; and gloomy clouds arise before his soul, especially on his death-bed.

How unhappy, then, is he who loses his God! He is more unhappy than a king deprived of his kingdom. He is as unhappy as Lucifer when he had committed his irreparable crime.

PART II.

THIS LOSS IS TOO LITTLE REGARDED.

1. *How frequently do Christians expose themselves to the danger of losing God?*

a. We do not seriously guard against mortal sin, which has for its consequence the loss of God. "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men." Eccles. xxi 2. Yet, how careless are you in guarding your senses and your heart! How careless are you in combating temptations! How little is sufficient to induce us to sin! Some flattering words, a few dollars!

b. Many search for occasions of mortal sin. Certain dangerous occasions are the frequent cause of sin. "Go not in the way of ruin, and thou shalt not stumble against the stones: trust

not thyself to a rugged way, lest thou set a stumbling-block to thy soul." Eccles. xxxii, 25. Yet many search after such occasions. Shameless dances and theatres. Bacchanalian revels.

2. *The loss of God causes no sadness.*

There is great sadness and much weeping over the loss of a temporal good. At the loss of God no tear, no groan. Although the devil is in their hearts, yet men eat and drink and are of good cheer. "A fool worketh mischief as if were for sport." Prov. x, 23.

3. *The lost God is not sought for again.*

The woman who had lost one groat lighted a candle, and swept the house, and sought diligently until she had found it. Lk. xv, 8. Such is the solicitude of men in seeking earthly things when lost. They act quite differently, when they have lost God. It is a revealed truth that, as sin expels God out of our own hearts, so penance brings him back. "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, living he shall live and die." Ezech. xviii, 21. Therefore penance, and especially the worthy reception of the Sacrament of penance, are the means of finding God, when He has been lost by sin. But alas! sinners are not anxious to employ the means of salvation.

a. The reception of the Sacrament of penance is often delayed. Months and years will pass from one confession to another. There is no lack of time or of opportunity for confession soon after committing sin; but no use is made of it.

b. The Sacrament of penance is often received without the necessary diligence. The examination of conscience is often superficial; contrition, doubtful; confession, imperfect.

Peroration: What is the state of our soul? Has anyone of you been so unhappy as to lose his God? He has suffered an immense loss. Let him be contrite, shedding tears over the loss of God. "My tears have been my bread day and night." Ps. xli, 4. Let him seek his God without delay. "Seek ye the Lord, and live." Amos. v, 6. (Admonition for a good and immediate confession.)

Joseph Schuen.

IV.

OBEY THE CHURCH.

“His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch.” Luke ii, 41. Behold the obedience to God worthy of your imitation! Christians ought in like manner to obey the precepts of the Church, yet how many disregard them! The precepts of the Church are binding in conscience. In order to convince you thereof, I say:

I. THE CHURCH TEACHES IN THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. She succeeded to his place for the sanctification of men. It is for this reason that

a. She wills nothing but what Christ wills. “My food is that I do the will of him who sent me.” John iv, 34. And “This is the will of God, your sanctification.” I Thess, iv, 3.

b. Jesus approves of what she does. His approval seals all of her enactments concerning faith, morals, and discipline. “Amen I say to you, whatever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven,” etc. Mt. xviii, 18. “If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.” l. c. 17.

c. Like Christ himself, she intends by her regulations to edify and sanctify mankind. “I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.” John xiv, 6. And “as Thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” John xvii, 18. Examine all the precepts of the Church, and the divine design of each will be manifest to you.

2. She is the perfection of Christ. The Holy Ghost consummates, through her, redemption.

a. By developing Christ’s doctrine: “I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them now.” John xvi, 12.

b. By applying sanctification to the world. It is for this reason that obedience to her precepts and regulations, as tending to our sanctification, is sacred duty.

II. THE CHURCH COMMANDS IN THE PLENITUDE OF CHRIST'S
POWER.

As *vicaria Christi* she is endowed with his authority:

1. In regard to legislature. The power of binding and loosing given to the Apostles. Mt. xvi, 18; xviii, 18. It is necessary, because a lawless society is a monstrosity; but the binding force of a law is derived from divine authority. The Apostles made use of this power, in regard to discipline. "We are, therefore, ambassadors of Christ." II Cor. v, 20. Who heareth you, he heareth me, etc.

2. Enforcing the law a necessary consequence. There is no reason to complain of the right of punishing being made use of. Mt. xviii, 17. "If he will not hear the Church," etc. Hear St. Paul saying: "I have judged * * * in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, * * * with the power of our Lord Jesus to deliver such a one (the incestuous adulterer) to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." I Cor. v. The spiritual punishment is often more effective than the corporal punishment.

3. Disobedience to the Church is therefore as sinful and punishable as disobedience to God Himself.

Peroration: Keep then the precepts of the Church, honoring Jesus Christ, cheering the Holy Church, and working out your salvation.

Vaskoncellos.

Second Sunday After Epiphany.

III.

ON MIXED MARRIAGES.

A marriage such as the one at Cana, at which the mother of Jesus was present, and to which Jesus and his disciples were invited, is blessed by the Father in Heaven, and is acceptable to him, whilst those marriages at which sensuality occupies the first place, and only temporal advantages are invited, are justly detested by God. Amongst these abominable marriages the so-called mixed marriages hold a conspicuous place for detestableness.

Arguments:

1. From the Old Testament.

a. The Sethites, being fascinated with the beauty of the daughters of the impious Cainities, took them for their wives. In consequence thereof the corruption of morals became so terrible, and so wide-spread, as to cause the deluge. Gen. vi, 1, etc. Whereas Abraham made the elder servant of his house swear not to take a wife for his son of the daughters of the Chananites. Gen. xxiv, 3.

b. The explicit commandment: "Thou shalt make no league with them (the Gentiles). * * * Neither shalt thou make marriages with them," etc. Deut. vii, 2; Jos. xxiii, 12; Judges iii, 5-8.

c. The sad example of Solomon, who was seduced by his idolatrous wives to become himself an idolater, and thus incurred the wrath of God. III Kings xi, 1, etc. A striking example is recorded, I Esdras, ix and x.

2. From the New Testament.

If intimate conversing with infidels and heretics is prohibited (II John x, 11; Titus iii, 70), how much more must inter-marriage with them be prohibited!

The Apostle allows marriage "only in the Lord" (I Cor. vii.

39), which words the Holy Fathers apply to mixed marriages. "Bear not the yoke together with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?" II Cor. vi, 14.

The motives, assigned by Holy Scripture for prohibiting marriages between the faithful and infidels, apply to heretics also.

There is no necessity to quote the Holy Fathers and the Councils, as no one will deny that the Fathers and the Church have all along detested these mixed marriages.

3. From reason :

a. The inequality of rights is too great. To the Catholic matrimony is a Sacrament, the ministers of which are the contracting parties, who for avoiding a sacrilege should be in the state of grace. To him the bonds of marriage cannot be dissolved, except by death; whilst a Protestant can find without trouble a motive for divorce, so that he may contract another marriage before the eyes of his lawful wife. The Catholic gives everything, the Protestant reserves everything.

b. The faith of the Catholic, whether husband or wife, and of the children, is exposed to great danger.

For if the Protestant adheres to his or her religion, he or she will endeavor to show its plausibility. In distorting the meaning of Scriptural texts Protestants have generally acquired a certain dexterity. Destroying is easier than building up.

Or, is the Protestant a Christian merely by name, the usual consequence to the Catholic is indifferentism.

And with regard to the children, matters are far worse. Is it possible for the faith of the children to be strong where the parents do not agree in their faith? "He that instructeth his son, shall be praised in him, and shall glory in him in the midst of his household." Eccles. xxx, 2.

4. A virtuous life is rendered exceedingly difficult.

a. Edifying conversation is not attempted, because it would soon lead to unprofitable controversy.

b. Religious reading in the family circle, so conducive to true virtue, is made impossible, because the same book does not suit both.

c. Catholic practices of prayer, as the rosary, frequent attendance at Holy Mass, give offence. Besides, the days of fasting and abstinence, the ceremonies, the sign of the cross, etc., create confusion, and not unseldom even discord.

5. The conjugal harmony is disturbed. Matrimony should represent the most intimate unity in life. In mixed marriages the fundamental condition is wanting.

a. The foundation of Christian love is faith. Love not founded on faith, being of a lower order, has less strength.

b. Religion is the intensest sentiment in the heart of man. In comparatively unimportant matters, one may condescend to the views of others. But when condescending and conniving are like to apostacy, the discord is permanent, setting their seal even on things which are less important.

Peroration: Do not expose yourselves to the danger of contracting a mixed marriage, yielding at once to the impulse of a sudden emotion, but control your feelings in time. The Church grants dispensation with reluctance, and for fear of more fatal consequences which might arise from a refusal of the petition. But if anybody should be so unmindful of his dignity, and forgetful of his duty, as to contract a mixed marriage without having first obtained a dispensation from his rightful pastor, let him be reminded that he commits an enormous sin; and that if he should contract such marriage with a person who has not been baptised, his union is null and void before God the Creator of heaven and earth, and supreme Law-giver for all nations and all lands.

P. A. Sherer.

IV.

DESPISE NOT YOUR NEIGHBOR.

“There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.” Probably the bride and bridegroom were kinfolks of hers, wherefore they invited her to partake of their

joy. And Mary, although "full of grace" and Mother of God, did not refuse the invitation. At the wedding the wine failing, Mary was afraid lest the embarrassment should become known to the guests; and therefore secretly had recourse to her divine Son, for the sake of the poor couple. O my brethren, take at heart this conduct of the Mother of God, and follow her example. Never despise your neighbor.

I. BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN ADVANTAGES.

1. Because of advantage of earthly fortune:

a. Whatever you possess, you owe it not to your industry or labor, but to God your Lord. "What hast thou that thou hast not received? And it thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" I Cor. iv, 7. Take for your model Joseph of Egypt, who although he was the king's vicergerent, admonished his brethren to tell the king that they were poor shepherds.

b. Goods of fortune are inconstant perishable, without true value. "The figure of this world passeth away." I Cor. vii, 31. The powerful and rich Nabuchodonosor "was driven away from among men, and ate grass like an ox; and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs grew like the feathers of eagles, and his nails like birds' claws." Dan. iv, 30.

2. Because of advantages of nature, as science, skill, beauty, etc.

a. They are gifts of God also. "I was a witty child, and had RECEIVED a good soul." Wisd. viii, 19. "All wisdom is from the Lord God." Eccles. i, 1. "Which of you, by thinking, can add to his stature one cubit?" Mt. vi, 27.

b. They aggravate your responsibility. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more." Lk. xii, 48.

3. Because of advantages of Grace.

a. Who else but God gave you these graces? What would you be without them? "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God." II Cor. iii, 5. "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except

God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was: I went to the Lord and besought him." Wisd. viii, 21.

b. And yet you do not know whether you are worthy of divine hatred or love. "I am not conscious to myself of anything: yet in this I am not justified: but he that judgeth me, is the Lord." I Cor. iv, 4. "Not he that commendeth himself, is approved; but he whom God commendeth. II Cor. x, 18.

II. BECAUSE OF HIS FAULTS.

1. Perhaps he did not receive as many graces from God as you. Who knows, if being in his stead you would not have fallen deeper yet.

a. God distributes his graces in an inscrutable way. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy: and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy. So it is not of him that willeth, not of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Rom. ix, 15, 16.

b. As the student dares not boast of his handwriting, when the teacher guides his hand, so you must not boast of your virtues, since it is to God you owe them. "Thou hast wrought all our works for us." Js. xxvi, 12. "I before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor and contumelious; but I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." I Tim. i, 13. St. Paul then does not conceal his faults of the past, and attributes his conversion to divine mercy, thus setting you an example.

2. You have your own faults, perhaps more than he has whom you are inclined to despise, but they are not publicly known. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John i, 8. "In many things we all offend." James iii, 2. The peacock is proud until he sees his ugly feet. Look at the stains of your conscience, and bow your head in humility. "For myself I will glory nothing, but in my infirmities." II Cor. xii, 5.

Peroration: Do not boast then of your advantages, but thank your Creator for them. Never despise others on account of their faults, but pray: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, thou wilt pardon my sin: for it is great." Ps. xxiv, 11. Buringer.

Third Sunday After Epiphany.

III.

ON SUNDAY AND ITS OBSERVANCE IN EARLY CHRISTENDOM.

“I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. viii, 11. By these words we are reminded of our eternal destiny, of which the Holy Church also reminds us by the organization of the Ecclesiastical Year, and particularly by keeping holy one day of the week, the Sunday or Lord’s Day. To contribute my share in admonishing you to employ this one day out of seven for the care of your soul, I will give you a plain instruction on Sunday, and the manner of observing it, in the first Christian centuries.

PART I.

For a full information about the Sunday I should explain to you the names which were given to this day, when its observance was introduced into Christianity, ordered by the Church, and what is its significance.

1. The names.

a. The Church calls this day the *Lord’s Day*, *Dominica*, because our Lord rose from death on this day, thus accomplishing the work of our salvation; and because it is consecrated exclusively to the honour of the Lord. This name is nearly as old as the Church, it being mentioned by St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John the Apostle, in his *Epistola ad Magnesios*, when he says: “If you have been made partakers of the new hope, keep no longer the Sabbath, but keep holy the *Day of the Lord*. For through him and his death we have obtained life.”

b. The generally accepted name is *Sunday*. It is mentioned by Justinus Martyr, who says: “On Sundays we all meet, because it is the day when God in creating the world separated light and darkness, and on it our Lord Jesus Christ rose

from death." The same motive is assigned by St. Ambrose : "The day of the Lord is to us venerable and solemn, because on it our Saviour, like the rising sun, shines in the light of resurrection, after having expelled the darkness of hell." Thus the Christians by adopting from the Gentiles the name of the first day in the week, did not adopt its meaning (viz.: the day consecrated to the god "Sun").

2. The observance of the Sunday reaches as far back as to the Apostolic age.

a. In Holy Scripture we read : "On the first day of the week, when we assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed with them," etc. "Apoc. xx, 7. From this text it follows that the Christians had assembled on the first day of the week to celebrate the Holy Mass, ("to break bread") and on this day St. Paul addressed them. That the choice of the Sunday was not exceptional, but customary, we see from I Cor. xvi, 2 : "On the first day of the week let everyone of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him ; that when I come, the gatherings be not then to be made." Could there be any other reason for fixing the first day of the week for collecting the alms of the faithful than that of its being a day consecrated to the Lord, when the Christians would attend divine service ?

b. The earliest fathers of the Church are witnesses of the fact of the celebration of Sunday, instead of Sabbath. To quote only one instance, Justinus Martyr, who flourished in the Second Century, speaks of observing Sunday as of a usage generally adopted. He says that the day of the sun gathers all who live in city or country in one place, that the service begins with reading the writings of the Apostles or Prophets, after which he who presides delivers a sermon, which is succeeded by prayers and thanksgiving for the bread and the chalice with wine and water. At last the deacons distribute the "Eucharist, the flesh and blood of the Saviour."

3. There was good reason indeed to have the Sabbath day replaced by Sunday. The Sabbath was instituted in remembrance of the creation. Gen. ii, 3 ; Exod. xx, 8-11. Yet, was

not the Sabbath a continual reminding of the wicked deed, by which man had deformed creation? Therefore a new Sabbath was to be instituted in remembrance of a blessed mystery. And this is our Sunday, instituted in remembrance of the second creation, that is of our eternal salvation, accomplished by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, who separated light from darkness, by expelling darkness from the face of the earth.

What is, after all, Sunday to us, unless we keep it holy? In this regard as in all other good things, the early Christians are our models.

PART II.

1. The early Christians adorned their churches on Sundays with great care, and were wont to array themselves in brighter, mostly white, garments. St. Leo the Great, approving of this custom, takes occasion therefrom to exhort us to adorn our soul on Sundays the more, because she is to celebrate the mystery of our Redemption.

The early Christians were on Sundays usually dressed in white, the white color being expressive of their joy in our Lord's resurrection, and of innocence and purity, without which we can never celebrate the Lord's Day in the society of the Saints in heaven.

2. The early Christians met on Sunday for divine service, consisting in the celebration of Holy Mass, in the explanation of the Gospel, and in common prayers. Already did the Apostolic Constitutions prescribe: "On the day of our Lord's resurrection, which we name the Lord's day, meet without failing, to thank God for the benefits we received through Jesus Christ." The zeal of the early Christians was such as to induce them in time of persecution to hold their divine services in caves and in the catacombs. When the Roman Emperor Diocletian had under pain of death forbidden them to attend divine service on Sunday, St. Saturnin, St. Victorin, and other Christians of the Church in Africa declared in spite of the most cruel torments: "Keeping the Sunday is to us an indispensable duty, and he who

does not comply with this duty, is guilty of a crime. We fulfil it as far as possible. We never stay away from the holy meeting. We keep God's commandments, though our faithfulness should be the cause of our death." These martyrs for our Lord's day received the palm of victory A. D. 304.

Compare yourself with these your ancestors in the faith! Is this example not confounding to you, who are so careless in observing Sunday!

3. A peculiar part of solemnizing the Sundays was the holding of *agapæ*—love-feasts—which were meals prepared at the expense of those who were in a condition of temporal prosperity, and of which both rich and poor used to partake. These feasts were invariably closed by prayer and sacred songs.

After divine service collections were made for the relief of the poor, and for other charitable purposes. Cf. I Cor. xvi, 2. You see then that these charitable collections are as old as the Church herself. You should therefore not complain of the number of charitable collections, and the less because we live in a country where the church is entirely dependent on the voluntary contributions of the faithful. "Alms delivereth from death; and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." Tob. xii, 9.

Peroration: Following the good example of the early Christians, spend your Sundays in such a manner as to make them to you days of grace and blessing. I need not exhort you to wear on Sundays better garments; you do so anyhow. I should rather warn you of luxury in your dress, by which our Sundays and temples are profaned,. Chancellor Thomas Moore, the English martyr, was, when in prison, on Sundays more particular about his dress. Being asked for the reason, as men did not see him in the prison, he answered: "It is only to honor my God on his day." Endeavor, you also, to honor God even by means of your dress. Endeavor, however, much more to adorn God's house, and your soul, who is the bride of the Lord; of which duty you are reminded by the white garments of old. Attend divine service regularly and with devotion, thanking

God for the benefit of our redemption. Shun worldly and sinful amusements; perform works of mercy and charity; that so may be fulfilled in you the promise of the Lord: "Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and that holdeth fast my covenant, I will bring them into my holy mount." Isai, lvi, 6.

J. Ev. Zollner.

IV.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH JESUS WILL HELP US.

Jesus Christ, thanks to his vocation as Messiah, healed a three-fold infirmity of the human race: he healed its blindness by the light of his divine doctrine; he cured the sick race by his grace; he atoned for the guilty race by giving satisfaction in its stead. No sooner is the sermon on the mountain finished (Mt. viii, 1-13) than his teaching activity is succeeded by his healing activity. By the sufferers of the Gospel mankind is represented to us. Those sufferers were entirely dependent on Jesus. So are all of us. We also learn from them under what conditions we may expect to obtain help from Jesus.

PART I.

VIVID FAITH, AS TAUGHT US IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE LEPER,
IS REQUIRED.

I. We have a vivid faith, if we

1. Put all our confidence in Jesus Christ; wherefore we should meditate on his bounty and infinite power, and on the historical proofs thereof. We should not waver in our faith when we think of "the goodness and kindness of our Saviour God." Titus. iii, 4.

2. If we subject ourselves to his holy will, and subordinate our personal wishes to the dispensation of Providence. Christian resignation.

II. Such was the faith of the leper.

1. He firmly trusts Jesus. Without doubting of his will

or power, he expects with confidence the healing word to be uttered. Certain that he would be healed, he was able to approach Jesus.

2. He was perfectly resigned. "Lord, if thou wilt." It is not my desire for health by which I would move thee to heal me; but if thou wilt, if it is according to thy wise dispensation.

The centurion had the same firm faith, so that Jesus himself expressed his admiration of it. "Only say the word."

III. Is our faith, also, like theirs, a living faith? It ought to be, because the abyss of Christ's infinite love lies open before us; and because whoever asks, "let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." James i, 6. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Mk. ix, 22. "All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you." Wisd. xi, 24. It is lack of faith that prevents our prayers being granted. "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." James i, 7.

PART II.

THE HUMBLE FAITH OF THE CENTURION.

I. Bear ever in mind:

1. That divine help is a grace. God does not owe it to you, you cannot claim it, and therefore you cannot prescribe how and when he should hear you. He distributes according to his own liking.

2. That you are unworthy of divine help. Your sufferings are deserved by your sins, wherefore "go ye and sin no more." Become first convinced of your unworthiness, remove the moral poison, and then ask for help, not trusting in your merits, but in divine mercy only, humbly asking for the crumbs.

II. Admire and follow herein the centurion:

1. How sublime was his idea of Christ! He saw clearly the Lord's high position: "Lord, trouble not thyself." Lk. vii, 6. He was convinced of his power working at a distance: "Only say the word."

2. He thought very little of himself. "I am not worthy," etc., "wherefore, neither did I think myself worthy to come to

thee." Lk. vii, 7. Here is profound humility, and truth. It rendered the unworthy worthy. Such faith bears fruit.

III. Mark the difference between you and the centurion.

1. Your demands how imperious! You expect God to help you without asking him; or to come unto your house uncalled. You lament with impatience as if God was obliged to help you. You lose courage and cease praying, when he delays. You complain as of an injustice. Where is your faith? Where your humility?

2. How arrogant you are as to the time, the means, and measure of help, as if God were but the executor of your sovereign will. No wonder, if God comes not, nor says the word, but tramples your own will under foot.

PART III.

THE PRAYING FAITH OF BOTH (LEPER AND CENTURION).

I. God demands such faith. "Pray, and you shall receive." It is but just that you should pray, because by it you acknowledge God's dominion, your dependence on him, and that you have no claim on anything from him.

II. Such faith is heard by God. "All things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing you shall receive." Mt. xxi, 22.

III. Both possessed this faith. It was accompanied by prayer. The leper adored Him. The centurion describes the torments of his servant, indeed an efficacious prayer. By such faith leprosy and palsy are healed, and even mountains moved according to Christ's promise.

Peroration: Come to Jesus with the same faith. You need his help, because from the cradle to the grave life is a heavy chain of sufferings and tribulations. Fall on your knees before him. He has yet the same tender heart, the same almighty hand. Come with lively and humble confidence. Never cease invoking him, and you will hear the consoling word: "Go ye, thy faith has made thee whole." But first remove the gap between you and Christ, remove the sin of the past, and for the future, "sin no more."

Zarbl.

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany.

III.

THE STING OF CONSCIENCE.

How widely different is the impression which the storm produces on Jesus and his disciples! Jesus sleeps; his disciples tremble. You see here the image of the good and evil conscience. The just is undisturbed in all the manifold storms of our earthly abode; the sinner fears and trembles, feeling the sting of his own conscience. This sting of conscience is, however, both tormenting and wholesome.

PART I.

THE STING OF CONSCIENCE IS TORMENTING.

1. It is an imperious witness, incessantly accusing man of his sins.

a. Throughout his whole lifetime. "Man is able to flee from everything except himself. Wherever he may betake himself his conscience is sure to follow him." St. Bernard.

b. On his death bed, where the words are to be fulfilled: "Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee; and thy apostasy shall rebuke thee." For biblical illustrations, Antiochus I. Mach. vi, 10, and Saul I Kings xxxi, 4, may serve. The Greek emperor Constantine had murdered his own brother. After this foul deed he thought he saw his brother, wherever he went, holding in his hand a cup filled with blood, and crying out to him: "Drink, drink, my brother."

2. It is a rigid judge, condemning the sinner

a. In this world. How anxious are men to conceal their vices and gloss over the foulest crime! The sinner deceives men, but his conscience condemns him. "Everyone that findeth me, shall kill me," said Cain, driven to despair by the remorse of his conscience.

b. On the day of judgment. When Jesus Christ says to the

sinner : "I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat," etc., Mt. xxv, 42, his conscience will reproach him at the same time with neglecting works of charity, and with many other crimes.

3. It is a cruel torturer, tormenting the sinner

a. In this world. "Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Rom. ii, 9. "Of all tribulations in human life none is greater than being conscious of mortal sins." St. Augustine. Tiberius was tormented with so vehement stings of conscience as to exclaim : "Would that the gods would destroy me, since I think daily to die anyhow !" (Suetonius.)

b. Indirectly, more in hell. The wicked die for earth and heaven ; but "their worm dieth not." Mk. ix, 45. They are perpetually persecuted by the thought : How easy was it for me to have been saved, if I only had been willing ! Madman ! For a few moments of lust, etc., thou has forfeited heaven, etc. The poets of old, as Virgil, spoke of Tityus who for his frantic love was condemned to hell, where a vulture incessantly tore his bowels. A true figure of the remorse of conscience in hell !

PART II.

THE STING OF CONSCIENCE IS SALUTARY.

The remorse in consequence of sin cannot be salutary to man, except while he is on earth. And salutary indeed it is on earth.

1. It is a proof of divine mercy, being

a. A great grace granted to every sinner. It is the voice of God's spirit. "God has sent the Spirit of his son into your hearts." Gal. iv, 6.

b. The first of all graces which God bestows on the sinner, to enable him to begin the work of his conversion. By the remorse of conscience he moves his heart. Nathan upbraided Daniel with his crime, whereupon the king exclaimed : "I have sinned against the Lord." II Kings xii, 13. God, in order to protect him from despair, said to Cain : "If thou do ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door." Gen. iv, 7.

c. A grace such as is best becoming God's greatness and

majesty. By the remorse of conscience God influences man, not by entreating, but by threatening and terrifying, as Lord and Judge. Achab's tyranny, punishment, and penance. III Kings xxi.

d. A grace which has the greatest power over man's heart. It follows him everywhere, and the more the sinner strives to repel it, the more it adheres to him. It will pursue him, until for the sake of repose he finds himself forced, as it were, into penance. "We have looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, the iniquities of our fathers, because we have sinned against thee." Jerem. xiv, 19.

2. If the sting of conscience should decrease in acuteness, it is a token of divine wrath being poured out upon the sinner. If the sinner should be deaf to the voice of his conscience, if this frequent call on the part of God, the Merciful Father, should be heard in vain, the soul falls into deadly sleep. This sleep is the consequence of divine grace being taken away from him. Then all is mute. Nothing moves the sinner, no event is able to stir him up. "And my indignation shall rest in thee; and my jealousy shall depart from thee." Ezech. xvi, 42.

Peroration: Let us then shun sin. Its bite is painful. But we are perhaps sinners, feeling the torment of an evil conscience! O mercy of my God, take not away from us thy spirit. Suffer not our hearts to harden, nor to become deaf to thy voice!

Laselve.

IV.

ON STRONG AND FEEBLE FAITH.

Next to charity Jesus Christ inculcated on his disciples the practice of no virtue more constantly and urgently than that of faith or confidence in him. However great the danger appeared, his disciples must not waver in their faith. He often

invited dangers, in order to confirm them in faith. For the same reason he called up the tempest on the sea. Jesus requires of us the same faith and confidence.

I. JESUS DEMANDS A STONG FAITH.

1. The faith of man could never be too great in him.

a. He admired and praised the faith of the centurion. "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel." Mt. viii, 10.

b. He rewarded the faith of the woman of Chanaan. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt." Mt. xv, 28.

c. It was for her great faith that he healed the woman who had had an issue of blood for twelve years. "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole."

2. Whoever had faith, was encouraged and assisted.

a. He anticipated their prayer. He called the two blind men and said: "What will ye that I should do to you?" Mt. xx, 32. He asked the man who had been thirty-eight years under his infirmity: "Wilt thou be made whole?" John v, 6.

b. He did what he was asked to do. The leper desires to be cleansed, and he is cleansed. Cf. Mt. viii, 1, 3; xv, 28.

c. He gave more than he was asked for. The man sick of palsy asks for his health, and receives health and remission of sins. Mt. ix, 2. The Lord goes to the house of the Centurion, to heal his servant, though the Centurion remonstrates against the honor of a visit. Mt. viii, 7, 8.

3. Those who had faith, did not ask enough.

a. He solicited men to pray for more. When some one said to the ruler of the synagogue: "Thy daughter is dead, trouble him not," Jesus, hearing this word, answered the father of the maid. "Fear not, believe only, and she shall be safe." Luke viii, 49, 50. "He that believeth in me, the works that I do, he shall do also, and greater than these shall he do." John xiv, 12.

b. He admonishes them to ask him even for miracles. "I

say to you, that if two of you shall agree upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my father who is in heaven." Mt. xviii, 19. "Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain: Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe, that whatsoever he shall say, shall be done, it shall be done for him." Mark xi, 23.

II. JESUS PUNISHED FEEBLE FAITH.

1. By reprimanding men for it. "He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart." Mark xvi, 14. "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all the things which the prophets have spoken." Luke xxiv, 25, 26.

2. By delaying to bestow benefits. Mark iv, 16-23.

3. By leaving them and refusing help and signs. "He wrought not many miracles there (in Nazareth), because of their unbelief." Mt. xiii, 58. "Why doth this generation seek a sign? Amen I say to you, a sign shall not be given to this generation." Mark viii, 12.

Peroration: Increase, then, in faith. Strong faith obtains all things from God, whilst he whose faith is feeble, is left helpless and forsaken.

Tirinus.

Fifth Sunday After Epiphany.

III.

CONTEMPT OF THE CHURCH AND INDIFFERENTISM.

The cockle which the enemy sowed by his emissaries of the last century, has grown rapidly and threatens to smother the wheat. It seldom appears amongst Catholics under the form of frivolous infidelity, but frequently as contempt of the Church, and indifferentism in regard to the Christian denominations. It is considered as *bon ton*, as the sign of a well-bred man. As "minister of Christ" obliged to pluck up the cockle, the priest has to lift his voice against this fashionable evil. Therefore I wish to impress upon your minds

I. THE INJUSTICE OF SUCH CONTEMPT WHEN WE CONSIDER THE OBJECT OF IT.

By despising the Church, you despise

1. Christ's institution. That is what the Church is distinctively. As such she is stamped, and made perceptible to every unprejudiced mind by her four marks of unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity; of not one of which can any sect whatsoever boast. Hence contempt of the Church is like contempt of God. "He that despiseth you, despiseth me."

2. The guardian of the Christian faith. For Christ deposited with her the truth, which she has defended in the most terrible struggles. She has protected and preserved scripture and tradition. Therefore it is ungrateful to be ashamed of her.

3. Infallible authority. Christ "will be with her all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 20. "The spirit of truth shall abide with her for ever." John xiv, 16, 17. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." Mt. xvi, 18. How necessary is her infallible authority in doubts and dissensions! Who else is competent to give a decision? Who else ever pretended to be? Think of the dissensions of the sects, and you

will concede the necessity of an infallible authority. Hence, contempt of the church is no less than contempt of the divine spirit, and of your own spiritual welfare.

4. God's holy will. Consider the precepts of the church. All are founded on Christ's commandment, or imperative example. The church determines only the time and manner of their observance. Consequently by revolting against the church, you revolt against God.

5. The means of salvation. The church, by her sacraments, gives you the necessary means of salvation. Consider the end and efficacy of each of the sacraments. Consequently by despising the church, you forfeit your own salvation.

6. The public worship of God. How sublime and moving the worship that you despise! In the first place the well-spring of all the forces of all the celestial beams,—Jesus—in the blessed sacrament, and the holy sacrifice of mass; then the holy sacraments, full of significance! Those who are separated from the church admire and, even some of these, try to imitate, portions of our divine service, though they perceive no fruit, because the soul of divine service, Christ's sacrifice and sacramental presence, are lost. Consequently the whole sublimity of the service is thrown away whenever you despise the church.

7. The blessing of the nations. What was earth before the Christian era? To whom is mankind indebted for civilization, art, science, and adjustment of the disproportions in social life, as for instance gradual abolition of slavery? To the spirit, influence and struggles of the church, to the labors and blood of zealous bishops and priests and monks. Consequently you despise the greatest benefactor of mankind.

8. The strongest bulwark of private and public welfare. Call to mind the blessed influence of confession; the blessing conferred by the indissolubility of marriage; the doctrine of the origin of all existing power from God, and the practical exercise of her members in obedience and self-denial. Whenever revolutions broke out in Catholic countries, the liberty and influence of the church had been first checked in them. Consequently you despise the genius of social welfare.

Is such a behavior generous, reasonable, moral? Is it not rather meanness, gross ignorance, ignominious ingratitude, cowardice in face of the spirit of this world? Now let us consider the twin-brother of the contempt of the church, viz. :

II. INDIFFERENTISM AND ITS IMPROPRIETY.

The dogma of the "enlightened mind" is as follows: "There is no essential difference between the denominations; all are from Christ; each leads to heaven; all joined together possess the whole truth. Therefore all are equally good." Childish ignorance!

1. There is an essential difference, even, even in the first principles. We have scripture and tradition; Protestants have scripture only. Who is the legal interpreter? Everyone—the church. Is the church visible or invisible? No—yes. Did Christ appoint St. Peter and his successor to be the head of his church? No, the Pope is the antichrist. Yes, he is Christ's Vicar on earth. How will you save your soul? By faith and good works—by faith only. Is man, born in original sin, yet free to do good or evil? Yes he is. No he is not. How many sacraments has our Lord instituted? Seven. No, only two or three. In the name of common sense, I ask, is all this unessential?

2. They cannot all come from Christ. "I am the way, the truth and life." John xiv, 6. Do sweet and better water come from the same spring? Can Jesus Christ answer in the affirmative and in the negative to the same question? In short, can a lie as well as truth come from Christ, and have an equal claim on the human mind? Impossible! Therefore firmness is necessary. "Who is not for me, he is against me." But you must decide in favor of the Catholic Church.

3. The Catholic Church is the only true Church. One Christ, consequently one church. "I believe in one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." And that this one true church is the Catholic, is taught by history. But that is intolerance! Yes, intolerance of error, not of the erring.

4. The Catholic Church is the only saving Church, the mother bearing children for heaven. "Outside of the church one can have everything except salvation." St. Augustine. Why? She teaches the whole truth, and gives the fullness of grace. Then all who are outside of the church are condemned? God will judge, not we. Anyhow, they cannot be saved, except by the desire for truth, for the Catholic Church. But woe to the apostates, and to those who are not excusable for want of necessary knowledge!

Peroration: You see now the absurdity of indifferentism. Its adherents are branded with ignominious ignorance. But you who are faithful, rejoice in giving thanks to God and his holy church, and enjoy her treasures.

Rietter.

IV.

COCKLE AND WHEAT.

By the words "cockle," "wheat," "fire," and "barn," the quality and the final fate of the wicked and just are well represented.

I. THE COCKLE AND ITS FATE.

1. The wickedness of the sinner is appropriately compared with the cockle, especially the darnel.

a. Darnel has the effect of choking the corn. Thus the understanding, even of Solomon, was choked by sensuality.

b. It is bitter. Thus avarice creates great bitterness in acquiring and preserving and losing earthly goods.

c. It is useless. Thus all aspirations of pride will be blasted like chaff.

2. The lot of the sinner and of the cockle are alike. By the binding into bundles are understood the everlasting fetters, and the partaking of the same tortures, by those involved in the same fate. The fire means hell. The horrors of hellfire consist (*a*) in its burning without consuming those subjected to its

anguish. (*b*) In comprising all extremes, heat and cold, fire and darkness. Hence, howling and gnashing of teeth, flaming furnace and exterior darkness. *c*. In tormenting to such a degree that, compared with it, our fire is only a painted fire. (*d*) In its never being quenched.

II. THE WHEAT AND ITS FATE.

1. The virtue of good Christians is compared to wheat. Purity is signified by its white blossom; divine love, by the reddish color of the grain; and the weight of their good works on God's scales is signified by the weight of its spikes.

2. By the gathering of the wheat into the barn is meant the destiny of the just for celestial glory, which glory is conspicuous (*a*) for its perfect beauty as regards the mansions; (*b*) for the most perfect enjoyments; (*c*) for its eternal duration.

Peroration: Application of the text: "By the fruit of their wheat their wine, and oil they are multiplied. Ps. iv, 8. The co-operation of the Blessed Trinity in the benediction of the elect is signified; the elect receiving their wheat from the Father, the wine from the Son, and the oil from the Holy Ghost.

St. Thomas Aquinas.

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany.

III.

GREAT PERFORMANCES OUT OF LITTLE THINGS.

However small the grain may be that is sown in the earth, it can grow into a large, magnificent, tree. And even the branches of the tree will grow to a great length. How applicable this is also to the tree of Christendom—the church of Christ, is declared by our Lord himself. Every branch of this tree, every member of this Church, within himself the germ of true greatness. We see the proof of this assertion

I. IN JESUS CHRIST.

I. He gave the Evangelical Counsels by which although, they were not given as precepts, great things have been accomplished.

1. The counsel of voluntary poverty. “Behold, we have left all things, and have followed thee.” Mt. xix, 27. In the first age of the church all believers followed this counsel. Cf. Act. iv, 32–37. How many are there in our times who have left all things!

2. The counsel of perpetual charity. A word understood by few! Yet, how great effects it has produced! “Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give counsel, etc.” I Cor. vii, 25–28. How great is the number of the religious who keep this counsel in our days of weakness! How plentiful and beneficial the consequences, as regards the care of souls by priests not hindered by earthly ties, the care of the poor sick, and the education of youth!

3. The counsel of entire obedience to a spiritual superior. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” Mt. xvi, 24. Great things are accomplished by those who keep this counsel, especially in the missions amongst the Gentiles.

II. How great was the power connected with his words,

1. When teaching. “The people were in admiration at his

doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having authority, not as their Scribes and Pharisees." Mt. vii, 28, 29. "Never did man speak like this man." John vii, 46. When Christ was teaching in the synagogue, "many hearing him were in admiration at his doctrine, saying: How came this man by all these things? and what wisdom is this that is given to him?" Mark vi, 2.

2. When he commanded, his words were obeyed

a. By the elements. "Then rising up, he commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm." Mt. viii, 27. *b.* By diseases of every description. "Healing all diseases and infirmities among the people." Mt. iv, 23. By his word he healed the leper; ("I will" Mt. viii, 3); the "woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bent down, and could not look upwards at all;" Lk. xiii, 11; the man who had been eight and thirty years under infirmity; John v. 3. *c.* By death; the dead young man at Naim; Lk. vii, 12-15. Lazarus John xi, 32-34. *d.* by sin. "They brought to him a man sick of the palsy * * and Jesus said to him: Son be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee." Mt. ix, 2. *e.* by the devil. "They brought to him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirit with his word." Mt. viii, 16. He cast the devil out of a dumb man; Mt. ix, 33; then, out of one who was blind and dumb; l. c. xii, 22; out of a lunatic; xvii, 17; and he cast out an unclean devil. St. Luke ix, 35.

III. Jesus produced the most wonderful effects by apparently insignificant means.

1. By his breath. "He breathed on them: and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," etc. John xx, 22, Gen. ii, 7.

2. By his spittle. "He put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, touched his tongue, * * * * and immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed; and he spoke right." Mk. vii, 33-37. "And spitting upon his (the blind man's) eyes * * he asked him if he saw anything. And looking up he said: "I see men as trees, walking." viii, 23, 24, Cf. John ix, 6, 7.

3. By the hem of his garment. "And behold, a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years * * touched the hem of his garment * * * and was made whole from that hour." Mt. ix, 20-22. "And as many as touched the the hem of his garment, were made whole." Mt. xiv, 36.

II. IN HIS DISCIPLES.

I. In the Apostles. Great miracles were wrought

1. By their shadow. "They brought out the sick into the streets, * * * that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities." Act. v, 15.

2. By their handkerchiefs and aprons. "And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul. So that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the disease departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them." Act. xix, 11, 12.

3. By their touch. "And (Peter) giving her (Father) his hand, he raised her up." Act. ix, 41. Eutychius, when sleeping fell from the third loft down, and was taken up dead. Paul laid himself upon him, and embracing him, said: * * His soul is in him, etc. Act. xx, 9-12.

II. In the rest of his disciples.

1. In sinners. The greatest sinners have it yet in their power to become citizens of the celestial kingdom. "The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you." Mt. xxi, 31. "There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." Lk. xv, 7.

2. In the just. "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come." Rom. viii, 18. Their last works are great in the sight of God. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me," etc. Mt. x, 40-42. Their offerings, however small, are acceptable to God. "Verily I say to you, that this poor widow (who cast two brass mites) hath cast in more than they all." Lk. xxi, 3.

3. In children. God has revealed to the little ones what

he has hid from the wise and prudent. Mt. xi. 25. "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Mt. xxiii, 3. "Such is the kingdom of God." Mk. x, 14, 15.

4. In women. A woman was allowed to wash the feet of Jesus, anoint his sacred head. Mt. xxvi, 7. Jesus at Jacob's well. First appearance of Christ to the women after his Resurrection. Mt. xxviii, 5. St. John xx, 14.

5. In those who are considered fools by the world. "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise." I Cor. 1, 27-29. "If any man among you seem to be wise in the world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. I Cor. iii, 18.

Peroration: God works great effects through the smallest means. If you will be great, humble yourselves. "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, he hath exalted the humble." Lk. i, 52.

Tirinus.

IV.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST ON EARTH.

"It becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof." Mt. xiii, 32. The tree growing from a small seed and presenting to the birds of the air a cherished abode, signifies, according to the Holy Fathers, the holy Catholic Church. Planted in the land of the Jews, it grew in the course of time into a large tree extending its branches over all the lands of the children of Adam. The church is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, to establish which he descended from heaven, and which from the height of heaven he continually protects and blesses. * * * Let this kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth be the subject of our present meditation. I say it is a kingdom (1) glorified by miracles, (2) a gracious, and (3) an indelible kingdom.

PART I.

THE CHURCH GLORIFIED BY MIRACLES.

I. In its *foundation*.

The church was established on a foundation which, considered from a merely human point of view, afforded no prospect of duration.

a. Its king—an outcast from the world, being reputed with the wicked. Isai liii, 12, etc.

b. Its princes—poor fishermen from Galilee, boasting of no illustrious lineage, and destitute alike of high culture, the gift of eloquence, riches, influence, and high state.

c. The weapons—neither sword nor lance; no army, etc.

d. The animating principle of this kingdom—the gospel waging continual war against the passions of men.

On a foundation of such sort was the building of the church attempted. A great miracle indeed, if the attempt succeeded!

2. Miracles on the very *day of its birth*.

The church was established on the day of Pentecost by the visible advent of the Holy Ghost. Act. ii, 1-11. The proceeding is one uninterrupted chain of miracles: *a.* The sudden storm. *b.* The cloven tongues as it were of fire. *c.* The gift of tongues. *d.* The heroism of the Apostles. *e.* The conversion of several thousands.

3. Miracles in its *propagation*.

The church flourished

a. In a degenerate world.

All mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, were wicked. In Israel only a few pious seed were found, whilst the greater part of the nation had sunk into the filth of vice. The Gentiles were “filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, covetousness, wickedness, full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy, etc..” Rom. i, 29. Yet in the midst of this degraded world the church won her way with incredible rapidity, so that the Apos-

tle could write to the Colossians: "The gospel is in the whole world." I 6.

b. In the midst of innumerable persecutions.

The world waged war against the church. Torrents of blood were flowing during three centuries. The church could not be destroyed. At the end, they whose sword had raged against the church, bowed their head before the cross.

c. By employing no means but the preaching of the gospel.

The Apostles and their successors had none of these things to offer to the nations, which the human heart covets; neither honor, nor gold, nor power. They had only the word of God, which is "more penetrating than any two-edged sword; and reaching into the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also the marrow." Heb. iv, 12.

How wonderful is the propagation of Christ! "If men will not believe that at the propagation of the gospel miracles were performed, this one great miracle is sufficient that the world has believed without miracles." St. Augustine.

4. Miracles up to the present day.

a. The very preservation of the church during eighteen centuries, is a continual miracle. How many, how insidious, and how powerful have been the machinations, up to our times, by which the destruction of the church has been attempted!

b. Who could count the miracles which have been continually worked in the church by the saints! Many signs and wonders have been made manifest in our times also.

Thus the church stands before us in her majesty of miracles. The powerful voice of miracles cries out to you: "The church is God's own work." There is no other religious community which can boast of this miraculous testimony.

PART II.

Jesus Christ has established his kingdom for the salvation of mankind, that they may find the grace and consolation of heaven. "I am come, that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." John x, 10. The church bestows blessings upon us

1. By the truth she makes known to us.

"I am the truth." The king of all truth confided his gospel to the church, and protects it by the assistance of the Holy Ghost from all adulteration. Therefore the church is the "City of Truth, the Lord of hosts dwelling in it." Zach. viii, 3. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." I Tim. iii, 15. The Catholic Christian, knowing that the word announced by his church is infallible truth, finds in it repose for his mind. He has a sufficient answer to all questions concerning God and eternity, the destiny of his own soul, and the way leading to her salvation. "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord." Ps. cxxi, 1.

2. By the balsam she offers.

Great is the misery of men on earth. "Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries." Job xiv, 1. The church holds her hands expanded over the poor human family, blessing and consoling it. She has balsam for the poor, the forsaken and dying, particularly for the sinner. How many millions of tears has she wiped away! (Preaching. The holy sacraments. Charitable institutions.)

3. By the promises she has been authorized to make.

"In the Catholic Church alone salvation is preached." Eusebius in ps 86. "In her alone dwelleth the Triune God." Augustine Symb. cap 6. Therefore she has an indisputable right to promise heaven to her children, and to lead them along the path to heaven. The prospect of heaven is an exceedingly great consolation for man, especially at the hour of death. "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. II Cor. iv, 17.

Thus the Church is the greatest benefactor of mankind, and thereby also proves herself to be the bride of him "who went about doing good." Act. x, 38.

PART III.

Jesus Christ was to establish a kingdom, which was destined

to last till the consummation of the world. The church then cannot be destroyed, as we are assured

1. *By the word of God.*

The prophet announced the perpetual duration of the church. Isaias describes her as "a tabernacle that cannot be removed; neither shall the nails thereof be taken away forever; neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." Is. xxxiii, 20. Daniel ii, 44. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations; and then shall the consummation come." Mt. xxiv, 14. "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 20.

2. *By history.*

The church has stood the test of nearly two thousand years. Kingdoms have disappeared around and about her side. Nations have died away. * * How many and vehement are the storms which in this length of time have burst upon the church! Any other kingdom would have been reduced to ruins. The church is still full of life, raising toward heaven her head adorned with many triumphal crowns. "By the Lord hath this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes." Mk. xii, 11. The history of nearly two thousand years guarantees for the future. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mt. xvi, 18.

The church then cannot be destroyed. This is another proof of her divine origin. "If this design, or work, be of men, it will fall to nothing. But if it be of God, you are not able to destroy it." Act. v, 38.

Peroration: Let us go to her fountains of grace. Let us not tremble on account of the present tempests. Let us prove ourselves her faithful children.

Joseph Schuen.

Forty Hours' Devotion.

THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR A REMEDY AGAINST THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS.

Six Sermons by Joseph Ehrler.

I.

THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT A REMEDY AGAINST PRIDE.

“Behold the Lamb of God; behold he who taketh away the sin of the world.” John i, 29. As the forty hours’ devotion is being celebrated at present in this church, I have good reason to repeat to you the words of the Apostle to the Corinthians: “And we helping do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith: In an accepted time have I heard thee; and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” II Cor. vi, 1. Verily, this time is acceptable, is the day of salvation. For I may say to you with regard to Holy Eucharist in the words of St. John: “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” It is especially by the Most Blessed Sacrament that Jesus taketh away the sins of the world, it being a protection against, and a remedy for, all sins. I will prove this to you by showing that the Holy Eucharist is a continual protection against, and remedy for, the seven capital sins. I commence with the sin of pride.

I.

The mystery of our altars, by disclosing to us who we are, renders pride impossible.

You are convinced that pride is a pernicious vice. The proud man, being seduced in consequence of ignorance, or of sensuality, not only separates himself from God, but he even

fight against him, saying with Lucifer: I will not serve; I will not obey. "He hath run against him with his neck raised up, and is armed with a fat neck." Job xv, 26. Therefore "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." I Pet. v, 5.

What can give us more strength to struggle against this vice, than meditating on the most Blessed Sacrament? Pride is untruth, is a lie, the proud having lost the true knowledge of his being. Else he could not indulge in the sweet lust of the soul. The mystery of our altars calls to mind what we are. It tells us that we once possessed a great dignity, which we lost; and that to restore this dignity, the Son of God dwells in the Blessed Sacrament day and night.

You are fallen creatures, says Jesus Christ hidden under the appearance of bread and wine; you belong to a sinful race. My Father in heaven once walked with your parents in paradise, conversing with them as a father converses with his beloved children. But alas! they rebelled against God, breaking the ties of charity and union. And ever since the human race lay half dead on the wayside. And to restore the union and charity between the creator and the creature, I hide myself under the form of bread, so as to be able to enter under your roof, and to heal your soul, by reuniting this image of God with him whose image you are. Thus the Blessed Sacrament is the tree of life planted in paradise, the fruit of which neither the parents of the race nor their posterity ever tasted.

Who could be proud, when the Holy Eucharist reminds us of the history of our misery and usefulness? Oh! let us submit to him who debased himself so far as to hide himself under the species of bread and wine!

II.

We understand the exhortation of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament the more, when reflecting on the many humiliations to which he submits.

Great and incomprehensible was the humiliation of our Saviour in his incarnation; in his nativity, in his hidden life at

Nazareth, in his sacred passion. Yet it appears far greater when he conceals himself on our altars under the appearance of bread, and gives himself as nourishment for our souls.

1. Jesus died once for all mankind. Under the species of bread he renews his death for every individual soul without cessation. He was once intimately united with human nature; by means of Holy Communion he is intimately united with every Christian, being spiritually born again in every soul.

2. And what means of accomplishing his kindest design did he choose? He chose something which is an inanimate species wherein to hide himself, and thus remain in our midst. In his incarnation he hid himself in the form of human flesh, as St. Paul says, and here under the form of an inanimate thing. When our Saviour went about through Judea doing good, the words from his lips and the wisdom of his doctrine, his miracles and eloquence, nay his very appearance, the majesty of his figure and bearing, bore evidence of the indwelling Godhead. "We saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and of truth" (John i, 14), exclaimed the apostles when remembering the person of their master. In the Blessed Sacrament we behold no proof whatever of the heavenly power and splendor of our Saviour. A morsel of bread and a few drops of wine in appearance; and, under this appearance, the infinite God of heaven and earth!

3. In vain you would seek here those wonderful events by which heaven glorified the life of the Son of God on earth. When the infant reposed in the manger, holy angels illuminated the stable, and the fields at Bethlehem resounded with their songs. Kings came from the east to adore him, and an angel appeared to deliver him out of the hands of Herod. He was baptized in the river Jordan, and the heavens were opened to him, and a voice was heard speaking from out of the excellent glory. When, after the temptation, the devil left him, behold, angels came and ministered to him. At his death all the elements were to give testimony to his divinity, so that a Gentile exclaimed: "Indeed this was the Son of God." In this bles-

sed mystery of the altar all is still and quiet. The angels are not wanting; but you see them not. You see only the dim species of bread and wine.

4. I have not yet mentioned the many offences and outrages which Jesus suffers in this Blessed Sacrament. At the word of his unworthy ministers he appears on the altar. He descends into a sinful heart, in which the evil spirit abides. Sacrilegious hands attack him, and he suffers the outrage. His temple is in many cases "a den of thieves," and yet he leaves it not.

And you could look down upon your neighbor with a proud heart, whilst the Son of God, in his incomprehensible humility, looks down upon you from this tabernacle!

III.

The Blessed Sacrament displays before us our true greatness and dignity, and elevates us to a pride truly Christian.

If you desire to eradicate the vice of pride in your heart, turn your aspirations for greatness and honor into the right path; strive for the glory of the Christian, and so you will not love a lie any longer, but truth. Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament calls our attention to our heavenly glory, that, despising all the honors of the world, we may in humility raise up our spiritual eyes heavenward.

1. This adorable mystery invites us to the divine banquet, to be united with him in charity. He nourishes us, not with the products of the earth, but with his own precious flesh and blood. Jonathan gave David the shepherd boy his garments and arms as proof of his love. Jesus gives his own body and blood as proof of his love to the poor children of Adam. In consequence of this union we partake not only of his body and blood, but also of his divinity, so that we are elevated to a nature far above our own nature.

2. In consequence of this union, we live by the Son of God, as the Son of God lives by the Father. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." John vi, 58.

Besides other blessings of the Holy Eucharist, Holy Scripture mentions particularly as its effect life everlasting for body and soul. "Your fathers," says Jesus, "did eat manna in the desert; and they died. This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if any one eat of it, he may not die." v, 49, 50. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." v. 55.

Peroration: Children of men, turn your eyes to the Blessed Sacrament, and learn from it your true greatness and glory. How foolish it would be to seek it in anything else but in the communion with your Saviour in this banquet, and in the celestial glory, to which it will lead you. Oh! that you would frequently approach the communion table, and by a worthy reception of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the source of our eternal glory, crush the pride of your heart, the first of the capital sins!

II.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A REMEDY AGAINST AVARICE.

"I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." John vi, 41. The other dangerous passion in man is avarice. This sin is the inordinate desire for earthly possessions. When it has once struck root in the human heart, it is almost impossible to eradicate it. It increases with the increase of years, so that even the dying still embrace the idol they have worshiped in their life time. Therefore Holy Scripture warns us most forcibly against this vice. "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money; for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale." "You cannot serve God and the mammon," says our Saviour. "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat," etc." Mt. vi, 24. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." v, 33. "Take heed and beware of all covetousness." Lk. xii, 15. And St. Paul, convinced as he was of its diametrical opposition to the

spirit of Christianity, calls avarice "the service of idols." What means shall we then employ to extirpate from our hearts this horrible vice? The most effectual of all is, meditation on the Blessed Sacrament, and its frequent reception. I will give you four reasons in support of this assertion.

I.

The Blessed Sacrament excites in our soul a hunger for the true and real good.

What is the origin of avarice? The discontent of the human heart. Being desirous for rest and happiness, it seeks it in earthly things, though the Scripture says with regard to all those who spend the days of their life in avarice: "They shall return at evening (at the evening of their life), and shall suffer hunger like dogs." Ps. lviii, 7; that is, their heart shall never be satisfied by earthly goods. Our Saviour has prepared us a banquet in the Blessed Sacrament, to satiate the desire and hunger of our soul for rest and happiness. "Come to me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. You shall find rest to your souls." Mt. xi, 28, 29.

"Ye children of men," he says from this altar, "who seek your happiness in the things of this world, behold the banquet I have prepared for you. Your God desires to be your nourishment, the same God who created your souls according to his own image and likeness, who alone can satisfy the desire of your heart. Would you be so cruel as to feed the first-born daughter on the husks of sin? I myself will be your food and nourishment."

The Saviour has spoken the same words in his earthly life. "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Mt. iv, 5. The eternal word of the Father, the life of men on earth, has hidden himself under the species of our daily food, in order to strengthen and animate us. "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." John vi, 51. "My flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed." v, 56.

Let us then direct the desire of our hearts toward the Blessed Sacrament and say with the Prophet: "In thy sweet-

ness, O God, thou hast provided for the poor." Ps. lxxvii, 11. "Thou avaricious man," I say with St. Augustine, "why art thou looking downward upon the earth? He who made the earth is more perfect. Him thou shalt possess. If thou longest for gold, thou mayest perhaps not obtain it. God thou canst possess, if thou wilt."

II.

Another reason why so many are given to the vice of avarice is because they are wanting in confidence in divine Providence. Jesus himself says this is the cause why so many are solicitous, saying: "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? * * Your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." Mt. vi, 31, 32. And to strengthen the faith of his disciples, he alludes to the fowls of the air, and the lilies of the field, saying: "Now, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more you, O ye of little faith?" v, 30.

Now, how could God convince us of his Providence in a more stringent and amiable manner than by giving us his own body and blood as our food and nourishment? When the children of Israel saw the Manna for the first time, they asked one another in astonishment: "Manhu? which signifieth: what is this? for they knew not what it was. And Moses said to them: This is the bread, which the Lord hath given you to eat." Exod. xvi, 15. Greater must be our astonishment when we think of the bread of heaven, which the Lord has prepared for us in his body and blood.

If the Lord has given us himself as food, should he not give us all other things we may be in need of? Whenever we are tempted to avarice, let us say in the words of Holy Scripture: "The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing. He has set me in a place of pasture. He has brought me up on the water of refreshment. Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me." Ps. xxii, 1, 2, 5.

III.

This Blessed Sacrament exhorts us to esteem poverty,

and is thus a strong defence against temptations to avarice. Jesus made the most tremendous efforts to make riches and poverty appear in their true light. For this purpose he would not possess as much as where to repose his head; and when he repeatedly expounded the danger of riches, he called the poor blessed. His whole life was an uninterrupted course of poverty and privation. And in the Holy Eucharist he appears so poor, that a morsel of bread and a few drops of wine veil the infinite God of heaven and earth. Verily, Jesus Christ appears in the Sacrament of the altar in bitter poverty, as if covered with a few swaddling clothes in the manger, or as if he were naked on the Cross.

And who are the regular visitors of our Sacramental God? The poor, whilst the rich have many other things to look after, be it a farm, or a fine yoke of oxen, or a wife. If the Saviour dwells here in poverty, how can you love riches, and hate poverty?

IV.

A special kind of avarice is to close your hand against the needs of your neighbor. Now, the Holy Eucharist exhorts us to be charitable to our neighbor.

1. God's charity and liberality is nowhere so clearly magnified as in this Blessed Sacrament. "I have compassion on the multitude, said our Saviour; if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way." Mk. viii, 2, 3. And he prepared for them miraculous bread. "I have compassion on the multitude," he says, when he sees his children wending their toilsome way through the desert toward heaven, and prepares them the true Manna from heaven, his own body and blood.

2. In order to make this mystery of his charity possible, he renews continually his Sacred Passion and Death, though he has to suffer the greatest offences and outrages. We partake of this sacrifice by Holy Communion, and ought we not make sacrifices for the sake of our neighbor.

3. Even the species of bread and wine contain an exhortation to charity. For though taken from many wheat grains and

many grapes, they are now one. So we all should be one, brethren and sisters of one family. Remember, the same Jesus Christ, who enters your heart and becomes one with you, enters the heart of your neighbor also, and becomes one with him. And can you refuse to love and help him?

Peroration: May our God and Saviour, hidden under the species of bread and wine, inflame in our hearts the desire for celestial goods, and make us forget this earth! May he strengthen our confidence in him, that the impure spirit of avarice may not enter our hearts! May he elevate us to the love of poverty, and confirm in us Christian charity, that we may imitate his love towards us.

III.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A REMEDY AGAINST THE SINS OF THE FLESH.

“For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of elect, and wine springing from virgins.” Zach. ix, 17. As against pride and avarice, so is the Blessed Sacrament a strong remedy against drunkenness and lust, the sins of the flesh. They are twins of the same mother, conceived in consequence of the concupiscence of the flesh. Scripture and experience teach us so. “Wine is a luxurious thing, and drunkenness riotous; whosoever is delighted therewith shall not be wise.” Prov. xx, 1. “Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the colour thereof shineth in the glass. It goeth in pleasantly but in the end it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk. Thy eyes shall behold strange women; and thy heart shall utter perverse things.” xxiii, 31–33. Our divine Saviour and his apostles warn us most forcibly against these two vices. “Take heed to yourselves,” says Jesus, “lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life; and that day of judgment come upon you suddenly.” Lk. xxi, 34. “Fornication and uncleanness,” says the Apostle, “let it not so much as be named among

you." Eph. v, 3. "Be not deceived. He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption." Gal. xi, 7. Let us then apply means to subdue our carnal passions, let us above all adore and receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, because it is the most effectual remedy against lust and drunkenness.

PART I.

The Blessed Sacrament, by reminding us of our dignity as Christians, protects us from the ignominy of carnal sins.

1. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament reminds us of our dignity as children and images of God, so much so, that he himself dwells in us. You are not only images, but abodes of God, says Jesus to us from the altar. I myself am in you, for I am the life of your souls. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me." John vi, 57, 58. And St. Paul, perceiving the power of this Sacrament, exclaims: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20.

How ignominious appears any sin of the flesh, when compared with this our glory and magnificence! You have received the Son of God into your heart; and, by drunkenness or lust, your soul, the queen of your body, is degraded so far as to be a slave of your flesh. The bride of God becomes the servant of the devil. Your soul and body by this Sacrament are elevated to the throne of God; and by the impurities of the flesh you sink down to the level, nay beneath the level, of dumb brutes. "Like the horse and the mule, who have no understanding," says the Lord. Ps. xxxi, 9."

2. Our bodies are members of Jesus Christ, especially in consequence of receiving the Holy Eucharist. We are the branches, he is the vine. If this be so, what degradation, and how great injustice, are caused by the sins of the flesh! The drunkard degrades a member of Jesus Christ, nourished with his precious body and blood, beneath the level of a brute. The unchaste sinner abuses a member of the body of Jesus Christ so as to make it the instrument of sinful lust. St. Paul depicts sacrilegi-

ous degradation of an unchaste Christian in the following forcible words, which I repeat, although they are not in accordance with the sentimentality of the present generation: "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then, taking the members of Christ, make them the members of a harlot? God forbid! Or know you not, that he who adheres to a harlot, is made one body? For they shall be, saith he, two in one flesh. But he who adheres to the Lord, is one spirit. Fly fornication. Every sin that a man doeth, is without the body: but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body." I Cor. vi, 15-18. O Jesus! in the blessed Sacrament! suffer not, that any one of us should fall so deeply and outrage himself and thee, O Son of the Virgin, in so dreadful a manner!

PART II.

The Blessed Sacrament exhorts us to struggle against the sins of the flesh, and perfects all other means commonly employed against them.

I. It exhorts us to chastity.

1. For it is a virginal flesh that Jesus gives us in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. The virginal St. John reposed on his breast, being worthy of his tenderest affections. His foster-father was virginal. Virginal must be the priesthood to be worthy of administering the holy mysteries, and of handling Jesus hidden under the species of bread and wine. And does any one of us dare to approach this virginal flesh, when his heart is filled with carnal lust?

2. The flesh we receive in the Holy Eucharist, is the same flesh that was once sacrificed on the altar of the Cross, and is still sacrificed in the Holy Mass, before you can partake of it. Who can receive this food of the angels, before his heart has become dead to sin.

3. The preparations which the church requires of us, in order to receive worthily the Christian Manna, exhort us likewise that the spirit should gain the victory over the flesh. She commands us to cleanse our heart from sins by the sacrament of

penance, to receive it in a kneeling position, and to be fasting from midnight. Whoever approaches with an unchaste heart, virtually regards these commands of the church as a mockery; for of what avail are they, unless they prevail upon you to clean your heart?

II. All means which we may employ in order to subdue our passions are strengthened and perfected by the Holy Eucharist.

1. We are advised to take refuge in prayer as our foremost weapon to subdue all commotions of the flesh. Convinced of the efficacy of prayer in this regard, the Wise Man said to our Lord: "Give me not haughtiness of my eyes; and turn away from me all coveting. Take from me the greediness of the belly; and let not the lusts of the flesh take hold of me; and give me not over to a shameless and foolish mind." Eccles. xxiii, 5 6. Now, if by the Blessed Sacrament we are most intimately united with the Son of God, even with his virginal body, should then our prayer not be infinitely more powerful to subdue the lust of the flesh, so that we may exclaim with the Prophet Zacharias: "What is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine bringing forth virgins?" Accordingly history teaches us that frequent Communion preserved chastity and purity of heart in a countless host of Christians.

2. Another means is the remembrance of our last end. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." Eccles. vii, 40. The Blessed Sacrament reminds us that our soul and body, because strengthened by the body and blood of Jesus Christ, are to partake of a special glory. And shall we be bold enough to present before Jesus these our souls and bodies contaminated with the sins of the flesh, on the day of Judgment?

3. You will never shun the sins of the flesh, unless you shun the occasions leading to them. This flight from bad society is made easy by seeking the society of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar. Conversation and communion with our Saviour is sure to create a disgust for the society of sinners.

Peroration: O all ye who are victims to the passions of the flesh, come to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He shows you the impure sins in all their deformity; he exhorts you to fight against the unclean spirit, and supports you in your struggle, that you may never succumb. "Come to me all you that labour and are heavy laden; and I will refresh you."

IV.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A REMEDY AGAINST ENVY.

"Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up." I Cor. xiii, 4.

For another capital sin, the sin of envy, the Blessed Sacrament is a remedy also. We sin by envy, when we repine at our neighbor's good, and are sad when he enjoys temporal and spiritual blessings, but are glad when he is deprived of them. Whilst other sinners may have some appearance of excuse, for instance, the unchaste may excuse himself with his concupiscence, etc., the envious has not even an appearance of excuse. His sin is a devilish vice. The restless evil spirit repined at the happiness of our first parents, though he did not lose by their being happy. "By the way of the devil, death came into the world, and they follow him that are on his side." Wisd. ii, 24, 25. Envy has been, and is still, the cause of great crimes. Through envy Abel was killed, Joseph sold, Jesus crucified. Well may Holy Scripture call such a pernicious vice, rottenness of the bones. "Envy is the rottenness of the bones." Prov. xiv, 30. I am happy in presenting to you the Blessed Sacrament as a remedy against this pernicious vice. For this end I will contrast the Sacred heart of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist with the heart of the envious sinner.

I.

The heart of the envious is narrow, and given to meanness.

1. He has a low opinion of himself, being unmindful of

his true dignity and greatness. God has chosen us kings of his visible creation. He endowed our body and soul with many perfections, and adopted us as his children, and made us heirs of heaven. Only a narrow-minded and mean person is capable of being sad at his neighbor's prosperity in earthly things.

2. He has a low opinion of his neighbor. For if he recollected that he is his brother, adorned like himself with the image of God, redeemed by Christ's blood, protected by an angel, could his heart be sad, because the Lord does good to one of his brethren?

3. His demeanor is base with regard to God since he is far from praising the divine bounty and providence in distributing earthly goods.

a. Contrast therewith the heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

1. The abyss of infinite charity has instituted this Holy Sacrament. The Son of God not content with taking the human nature as his own, hides himself under the species of bread and wine, that every human heart might embrace its God, and in God find peace and happiness. Can you form an idea of a greater love?

2. The divine heart of our Saviour, by entering under your roof, shows you your true greatness, to which all Christians are invited, viz.: the adoption and inheritance of heaven. Of what consequence is it then, that your neighbor possesses a little more of earthly goods than you? It is only for a short time, anyhow, after which you will be all alike.

II.

Another cause of envy is, a bitter sentiment entertained toward your neighbor.

To extirpate this bitter sentiment, the Lord has established union between men by ties of nature and of grace.

1. By the ties of nature we are of the same origin, have one and the same Father, belong to the same family, possess the same nature. Hence, the desire to love and help one another is implanted in our nature.

2. This bond of nature is made firmer by the bond of grace, which is granted to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. He made us members of his mystical body, the church, whose head he is himself. "Now you are the body of Christ, and members of member." I Cor. xii, 27. Therefrom the Apostle draws the inference: "If one member suffer any thing, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it." v. 26. And if the Lord has given more blessings to one member than to the other, we must rejoice also." v. 24, 25, 21, 22.

He who suffers envy to reign in his heart, does not respect these two bonds of nature and grace.

Our Jesus endeavors to promote this intimate relation between men by the Blessed Sacrament.

1. His charity is manifested by the words which he spoke when he instituted this mystery of his charity. "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." Lk. xxii, 15. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. These things I command you, that you love one another." John xv, 13, 17. "Holy Father keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me; that they may be one, as we also are." xvii, 11. The Blessed Sacrament should be the bond of this charity.

2. The manner in which he communicates to us his body and blood, is expressive of the same fraternal love. He comes to us under the appearance of our food, bread and wine. "We being many, are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread." I Cor. x, 17.

3. Jesus allows all men to come to him, to adore and receive him; the poor, the sick, even sinners, who, like the prodigal son, return to him.

Who could, in spite of such charity, yet entertain envious thoughts?

III.

A frequent cause of envy is the insatiable desire for earthly goods.

1. We know from many examples of Holy Scripture that

a great desire for earthly things brings forth the vice of envy. The sons of Jacob hated Joseph, because they feared he would deprive them of their father's favor, and reign over them. Saul sought David's life, because he feared for his own honor and authority. The Pharisees persecuted Jesus with deadly hatred, because they feared for their own reputation.

2. In the Holy Eucharist Jesus directs the desire of our hearts towards himself. He gives himself; and what good could he refuse to us, after he has given himself?

Peroration: Let us then frequently adore and receive this most precious good, that we may forget the world and all that is in the world.

V.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT A REMEDY AGAINST ANGER.

“In your patience you shall possess your souls.” Lk. xxi, 19. Holy Scripture warns us in many places not to suffer ourselves to be carried away by the passion of anger. “If it be possible, as much as is in you, have peace with all men. Revenge not yourselves, but give place to wrath; for it is written: Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.” Rom. xii, 17, 18. St. James says: “You know my dearest brethren; and let every man be swift to hear; but slow to speak, and slow to anger. For the anger of man worketh not the justice of God.” James i, 19, 20. “Take up my yoke upon you,” said our Saviour, “and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls.” Mt. xi, 28. “Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.” v. 4. “In your patience you shall possess your souls.” The passion of anger proceeds from want of self-command, or of humility, or of charity. The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar heals these three wounds of our soul, and leads us to the opposite virtues, by reminding us of our dignity as Christians, and exhorting us to humility and Christian charity.

I.

The voice of anger springs from want of self-command. Anger proceeds from weakness of mind. Because the woman is more actuated by her feelings, than by her understanding, therefore "there is no anger above the anger of a woman." Eccles. xxv, 23. For this reason the Holy Fathers call anger the drunkenness of mind. And because he who is given to anger, is like a drunkard, he weeps over the sad condition of his soul, when his anger is appeased, without feeling strength and courage enough to resist his passion. "When the storm rages within, he is like a woman who, frightened by the tempest, throws overboard the most precious goods, and saves the commonest things. When the tempest abates, he becomes aware of what he has lost, and is sad." St. Chrysostom. If we would regard our dignity as children and likenesses of God, and as redeemed of Jesus Christ, we should learn to keep command over ourselves, so as to subdue the passion of anger. In the Blessed Sacrament our dignity appears to us in its full splendor; for which reason this divine mystery is a remedy against anger.

1. If Jesus Christ enters our heart, if we live in him, and he liveth in us, if we carry within us the Lamb of God who, when led to the slaughter, did not open his mouth, can we then remain passionate men, carried away by anger? Should we be governed by the impetuosity of our mind like a brute, or like one intoxicated, or a lunatic? Should we thus render ourselves unworthy of this great mystery of divine grace? Let us then follow the exhortation of St. Paul: "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy, and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against another: even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But, above all these things, have charity, which is the board of perfection." Col. iii, 12-14.

2. Holy Church calls the Holy Eucharist the bread of angels. The angels are happy by living in the presence of God, and by being nourished by divine intuition. We live in the pres-

ence of the Sacramental God, and are nourished by his body and blood. Is it not fair and just that we should resemble the holy angels who are not subject to passion or sinful inclination ?

3. In this Blessed Sacrament we receive the plenitude of grace. Not only our souls are strengthened and comforted ; but our bodies are nourished and sanctified by this bread of angels, so as to be no obstacle to the soul in her soaring toward heaven. How are we worthy of this most sacred mystery, if we, strengthened as we are by Jesus in body and soul, do not strenuously combat our own passion ?

II.

In many cases, it is want of humility that excites the anger of man.

Pride, the source of most sins, frequently urges a man to anger when others refuse to yield to his opinion or wishes.

The Blessed Sacrament, being the manifestation of profoundest humility, calls on the faithful to be humble of heart, and so to conquer the passion of anger.

1. In this Blessed Sacrament, Jesus hides himself under the appearance of our daily food, obeying the word of the priest. His body is placed on the tongue of the wicked ; Jesus is kissed by many Judases. Oh ! your Saviour is so humble and meek, and you are so proud and given to anger !

2. In many churches our Saviour dwells forgotten and forsaken by his children. How irreverent is the behavior of many Christians in church ! His altars and the tabernacle are often deprived of the most necessary ornaments. The Holy Sacrament is sometimes even profaned by sacrilegious hands. Jesus suffers all these outrages with deep humility. When one of the officers gave Jesus a blow, he said : " If I have spoken ill, give testimony of the evil ; but if well, why strikest thou me ? " John xviii, 23. In the Blessed Sacrament he suffers still greater outrages without complaint. And you would give way to your passion, when you think yourself offended !

3. All offences once committed against Jesus in his mortal life, are repeated by the sins against this Blessed Sacrament.

Here in this manger he is contemned by those he loves so tenderly. Here he is disowned by his own people, and derided by his enemies. Here he is crucified again. He not only suffers all these offences with patience, but continually renews mystically his sacred passion for the sake of our salvation. "As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come." I Cor. xi, 26. Who can show and remember the propitious death of our Saviour, and yet have his heart filled with bitterness and anger? Jesus himself warns us not to approach the altar, our heart full of gall. "If thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." Mt. v, 23.

III.

The third source of our anger is want of Christian charity to your neighbor.

Whenever we become angry, want of charity is, at least partly, the cause of our excitement, in opposition to our character as Christians. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another." John xvi, 35. "He that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" I John iv, 20. It is particularly the love of our enemies that the Gospel has made our duty. "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you," etc. Mt. v, 44. Rom. xii, 18.

The Blessed Sacrament exhorts us to this charity.

1. In addition to its being the remembrance of his sacred passion and death which he suffered for all, he gives himself as our food in this sacrament of charity. No one is excluded. He is the merciful father of the Gospel who embraces the prodigal son and prepares for him a celestial meal. He is the Egyptian Joseph who invites to his table those brethren who had betrayed and sold him. From the altar he cries up to heaven: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Lk. xxiii, 34. And you who continue to nourish hatred against your brother,

have you no fear of his one day addressing you in the words he once addressed to the unmerciful servant: "Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?" Mt. xviii, 32, 33.

2. This sentence is the more deserved, since the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, as it is the pledge of our reconciliation with God, so is it also the bond of peace with our neighbor. For this purpose Jesus has gathered us around the same table; which is also intimated by the bread made of many wheat-grains, and by the wine pressed from many grapes.

Peroration: "Are we to be wolves," says St. Chrysotom, "when we eat the Paschal Lamb?" We should be willing to make any sacrifice for the love of our neighbor; for here is the victim for the sins of the world. May we all take a delight in frequently approaching Jesus Christ in this sweetest mystery! He who stilled the waves of the sea, is willing and powerful to still the rising waves of your souls.

VI.

HOLY EUCHARIST A REMEDY AGAINST SLOTH.

"I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread." Ps. ci, 5. Sloth, for which all men have some inclination, is not so much a single sin, as a deplorable state of the soul. It bears the most fatal consequences. God gave us as the surest remedy against sloth the Holy Eucharist. When Elias the Prophet had fallen asleep in the desert, the angel of the Lord came, touched him, and said to him: "Arise, eat, for thou hast yet a great way to go." And he arose, and ate and drank; and he walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb." III Kings, xix, 7. The Blessed Sacrament gives us this strength on our way through the desert of this life to the mount of God in the next world. Whoever keeps far from it, he will some day

say with the Psalmist: "I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread." Would you know the reason, you must investigate the cause of spiritual sloth. The cause is, lack of love, and of zeal for God and the salvation of our soul. And inasmuch as the Blessed Sacrament shows forth God's deepest love for us, and is the highest product of his zeal in our behalf, and in behalf of our salvation, it will also be the foremost means of counteracting this deplorable state of our soul. For this end let us meditate on the indefatigable, tender, and self-sacrificing love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

I. THE INDEFATIGABLE LOVE OF THE SACRAMENTAL GOD.

St. John inaugurates the record of the institution of the Holy Eucharist in these words: "Having loved his own who was in the world, he loved them to the end." This Blessed Sacrament is all fire, all zeal and love, burning in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As his Heavenly Father had conversed with our first parents in Paradise, so the Son desired to converse with every human soul, as he had walked at the side of his people in the Holy Land. In this transport of love he instituted this Holy Sacrament, that he might be with us perpetually and in all places. "Do this for a commemoration of me," he said to his disciples, thereby giving them the power of consecration.

In this Blessed Sacrament he is continually born again, again lives the retired life at Nazareth, is anxious to teach the ignorant and convert the sinners, as in Judea and Galilee. On our altars he suffers and dies again for our salvation. Here his throne of grace is established, giving food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty. St. Chrysostom remarks appropriately that we have no reason to wish we might see Jesus as his disciples saw him, because, as we receive Jesus whole and entire, with his divinity and humanity, the above wish is more than complied with.

Is it not a disgrace for Christians not to return this ardent love of the Son of God?

II. THE TENDEREST LOVE OF THE SACRAMENTAL GOD.

The love of Jesus Christ is not only indefatigable, that is to say, never wearies nor ceases, but it is the tenderest love, which gives all things.

1. He gives himself to be our food. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," etc. John vi, 56 ff; Cf. v, 49. 50. Could our Saviour show a greater love than by giving himself to be our food and nourishment? Loving friends make presents to one another, being offerings of their love. Jonathan loved David as his own life, and to prove his love, he gave him his garments. Our Saviour was not content with giving his garments; he has given us his own body and blood.

There is no union so intimate as that effected by taking something as our food. It is changed into our own nature. Such is the union between Jesus and our souls; nay, it is more intimate still. For, when other food is changed into the substance of him who eats it, in the Blessed Sacrament we are transformed into Jesus Christ, so that we may exclaim with the Apostle: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii., 20.

Who is not convinced of the great injury inflicted on Jesus by lukewarmness and laziness? St. John describes the state of a lukewarm and lazy soul in the following words: "I know thy works; that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing: and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Apoc. iii, 15-17. He has received all graces in vain. He is cold and dead. His life is as a day on which the sun does not shine. Oh! that the adoration and reception of the Blessed Sacrament would verify in us the admonition of the Lord: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold (of love) tried in the fire, that thou mayest be made rich; and mayest be clothed in white garments (sanctifying grace), that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear; and

anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see (the consequences of thy lukewarmness)." v. 18.

III. A SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE.

1. Jesus by instituting the Holy Eucharist exhausted his omnipotence and wisdom. It embraces so many miracles that the Church applies to it the words of the Psalmist: "He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: he hath given food to them that fear him." Ps. cx, 4. He obeys the word of his minister. The species seem to hang in the air. The species being divided into fragments, the body of Jesus remains undivided. He is whole and entire in every separated part of the species, etc.

2. He is present here, though he suffers the most humiliating outrages and offences.

"The charity of Christ presseth us," said St. Paul, when speaking of his apostolic labors. The martyrs, confessors, virgins, etc, entertained the same sentiment with the Apostle. Our reward in heaven will be in proportion to our labors and sacrifices made for the love of God. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Ps. cxxv, 5. The glory of Jesus is to be our inheritance.

Peroration: Oh! that the Blessed Sacrament might eradicate from our hearts all inclination to sin. Receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ as frequently as possible. Would that frequent communion might be the blessed fruit of this forty hours' devotion.

Septuagesima Sunday.

III.

GOD'S CALL ON MANKIND.

Why is it that the Church is suddenly in mourning? She is bewailing her beloved, whose passion is to be represented to her once more. She is like a second Rachel bewailing her children, whose souls are killed by the tyrant Sin. Therefore it is that she, in contrast with the seducing call of the world, draws our attention to the call of God: "Go ye also into my vineyard." Truly the never-failing love of God is urging us. This divine love is figuratively represented by the householder's going out, and calling the whole human race at five different times.

God's call to all mankind.

1. The first going out early in the morning signifies the divine call to the *first couple* to work in God's vineyard.

a. This call was in a special manner directed to our first parents. After the world (the vineyard) was created, it was made Adam's and Eve's duty to cultivate it. "God put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it and to keep it" Gen. ii, 15, and to eat of its fruits. v, 16. Hence bodily work—the cultivation of nature—was partly their task. Sweet and wholesome; a commandment of love. The human soul, being a more magnificent paradise, our first parents were commanded to take care of its cultivation. Hence the commandment: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." v, 17. Their task then in the vineyard was, to deny their own will, to devote themselves to God by faith, hope and charity.

b. This first call was also directed to all mankind. The commandment is Catholic (universal) like the vineyard. Obedience to the call is made possible, because "God created man to his own image" (Gen. i, 27), imparting to him understanding, liberty, and desire of God. The reward to be gained is beatifying union with God, who hires laborers out of love.

Alas! those who were hired left God's vineyard to enter into the service of Satan. Sin was committed, and "after that men began to be multiplied * * * God saw that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times." Gen. vi, 15.

2. But instead of extirpating the sinful race, the second call came to *Noe*.

a. A *serious* call. The horrors of the deluge ought to render him and his offspring faithful in the service of God.

b. A *benign* call. The ruin of the entire race was prevented, a covenant of love and grace entered into, the second father of mankind was blessed. By the cultivation of the grapevine the spiritual vineyard is indicated. Alas! it was in consequence of pride and obstinacy that the second covenant was broken, and the people dispersed all over the world.

3. God kept his covenant, and thus the third call came to *Abram* at midday.

a. It was a call to serve the One God. Hence Abraham was separated from the idolaters, and elevated to the dignity of being the father of a self-dependent nation (Gen. xii, 1-3; xvii.) as the chosen laborers in God's vineyard.

Alas! the chosen people toiling in Egypt, are in danger of being extirpated, or becoming unfaithful to their calling.

4. Then God's fourth call is heard. The period from *Moses* to John the Baptist—the ninth hour—is an uninterrupted call, a search after laborers.

a. A call to Israel. Prophets are sent, Israel is governed in a miraculous way in good and evil days, and his hope in God and the Messiah is always maintained.

b. A call to the Gentiles. Israel's existence was for them a warning, and an intimation to adore the One living God. The Jews are dispersed; their social customs, based on religion, as they were, attract attention; many of their prophecies are made known to the Gentiles.

5. The householder goes out the fifth time in order that the vineyard might be crowded with laborers.

d. The Son of God himself invited the laborers to come. In this sense consider his birth into the world, his life, doctrines. "Last of all hath God spoken to us by his Son." Heb. i, 2.

b. God calls all men until day declines, by his Apostles, by the messengers of the Church, in all countries and ages, that they may come and cultivate the vineyard, i. e., the kingdom of God, by active faith, devoted love and mutual sanctification. "Even so, then, at this present time also, there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace." Rom. xi, 5.

Peroration: So solicitous is the care wherewith our heavenly Father provided for mankind. With the same solicitude, he cares for every one of us. He invited us early in the morning to come into his vineyard, adopting us as his children in the sacrament of Baptism and making a covenant with us. Now show your love towards your Father by keeping the promises made when you were taken into God's family. At about the third hour God calls on you again, gives you a Christian education, and strengthens you with the holy sacrament of confirmation. Whilst the world cries out: "Let us enjoy the good things that are present, etc. (Wisd. ii, 6 ff.) God warns you: "The figure of this world passeth away." (I Cor. vii, 31.) And then he confirms the covenant by the Eucharistic union with Jesus Christ. You heard the voice on the blessed day of your First Communion: "Suffer the little children to come to me," etc. Mk. x, 14. Alas! the devotion of childhood passeth away, and the householder goes out at midday and calls the young, when their passions are burning, or when they are idling away their time, by sodalities, by the necessity of preparation for a state of life, and by the sacrament of matrimony. And as there are yet many hesitating, he invites them by special blessings, as well as by dreadful threats, to render them weary of this world, and lift up their eyes toward heaven. And even late in the evening he calls again. Listen to him, it may be the eleventh hour for you. If you will not heed the loving voice of the Father, you will one day fear his revenge.

Zoczek.

IV.

WE ARE CALLED: ARE WE ALSO CHOSEN?

“Many are called, but few are chosen.” By this judgment the pride of the Jews, who considered the kingdom of God here on earth, as well as above in heaven, as their exclusive inheritance, was humiliated. And we who are the heirs not only of their rights, but also of their vices, should hear the same sentence with fear and trembling. Let us investigate this announcement of truth itself, for it is wholesome for us. We are of the many who are called; no doubt about it. Shall we be of the small number of the chosen ones also?

PART I.

WE ARE OF THE NUMBER WHO ARE CALLED.

I. Generally, as men. This we know

1. From Holy Scripture.

“Christ died for all.” II Cor. v, 15. “God will have all men to be saved,” I Tim. ii, 4. (Many in to-day’s Gospel means “all,” in which sense the word is often used in Scripture. v. Dan. xii, 2; Rom. v, 19.)

The same doctrine is expressed by similitudes and parables. All those whom the master of the family saw standing idle in the market-place he invited to go as laborers into his vineyard, and he sends an invitation to the wedding to as many as his servants could find. Mt. xxii, 9.

2. From the definition of the Church.

The council of Trent answers the doctrine of Calvin that some men are predestinated for sin. According to the doctrine of the Church on *gratia sufficiens* she does not exclude from it those who are not baptized.

3. The Fathers; and the Theologians of the School, teach that “the true light enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.” John i, 9. St. Ambrose: “This spiritual sun of justice is arisen for all, is come for all, has suffered for all, and is risen from death for all.” St. Thomas and his school assert

that God would reveal, either immediately or through a preacher of the faith, the necessary doctrines, to a man grown up in the wilderness, if he followed the dictates of his natural conscience. Peter and Cornelius.

II. Specially as Christians.

God calls on us

1. In our childhood (early in the morning), through baptism.
2. In our more advanced age, at every hour of the day, especially by his exhortations to do penance.

PART II.

ARE WE TO BE OF THE CHOSEN ONES?

I. We should be in fear about it, by reason of their small number, and of the large number of the reprobate. We infer this.

1. From sayings of Jesus Christ. "Few are chosen." "Many shall seek to enter (by the narrow gate), and shall not be able." Lk. xiii, 24. He calls the elect "little flock." Lk. xii, 32. The parable of the wedding feast, Mt. xxii, and of the supper. Lk. xiv, 16.

2. From insinuations of the Old Testament. Only Lot's family saved; Josue and Caleb are the only ones of 600,000 Israelites who enter into the promised land. Tobias was the only one not defiled with idolatry. Only three young men would not bow their knees before the king's statue. (Though "all these things happened to them in figure, and they are written for our correction," and although the events of the Old Testament have not the force of arguments, yet they may serve as illustrations.)

3. From reason.

a. Outside of the church there are millions of unbelievers, heathens, Jews, and heretics.

b. Within the walls of the Church how seldom do we find true virtue! How seldom innocence, or true penance!

II. Nevertheless we should put our hope and confidence in the Lord.

1. In itself, the number of the elect is great: martyrs, con-

fessors, virgins, bishops, and pontiffs, up to this day. St. John saw a great multitude, which no man could number. Apoc. vii, 9.

2. God is (*a*) bounty itself. Whoever asketh receiveth the good spirit. Lk. xi, 10 and 15. "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (father)." Rom. viii, 15. The very same spirit "who is the pledge of our inheritance." Eph. i, 14. *b*. He is almighty, "whereby he is able to save for ever." Heb. vii, 25. He is just, "wherefore he can condemn no one without guilt." St. Augustine.

3. Strive earnestly for your salvation, for "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." Mt. xi, 12. A small gate only leads into it. It is a reward for labor in the vineyard for "the good and faithful servant." Mt. xxv, 21. A crown of Justice which the Lord, the just judge, will render for striving lawfully. II Tim. iv, 8.

Peroration: "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you make sure your vocation and election," II Pet. i, 10; and be in your lifetime of the little flock who do God's holy will. "If you will be of the number of the predestinated, be of the number of the few." St. Augustine.

Scherer.

Sexagesima Sunday.

III.

THE WORD OF GOD AND TEMPORAL CARES.

The thorns choking the seed of God's word—what else are they but temporal cares? Is it not from the same cause that the same seed is often choked in your heart? In order to prevent it for the future, apply the following remedies:

I. Before you commence your daily pursuits, make a good intention.

The brute follows its instinct. Man, especially the Christian, should be moved by noble motives for all his actions. Therefore you should preface your deeds by a good intention.

1. Out of obedience to God. You are encouraged by the good examples put before you: Noe building the ark; (Gen. vi); Abraham wandering through the length and breadth of the land at God's command; (Gen. xii, 4); the heroes of Israel:—Josue conquering the City of Jericho; (Jos. vi); Gedeon saving the Israelites out of the hands of Madian; (Judg. vi, 1-24); David fighting against the giant Goliath. I Kings xvii.

2. For the love of God. "Let all your actions be done in charity." I Cor. xvi, 14. "And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding." Philip. i, 9.

3. For the purpose of obtaining eternal salvation. "Carefully study to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." II Tim. ii, 15. "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii, 28; Cf. Trid. vi, cap. xvi.

II. While you are at work,

1. Lift up your heart to God by prayer from time to time, which is recommended by Holy Scripture

a. In words. "I will that men pray in every place." I Tim. ii, 8. Jesus himself prays without cessation.

b. By examples : David who rose at midnight to give praise to God. Ps. cxviii, 62. St. Paul who remembered Timothy in his prayers day and night. II Tim. i, 3. Cornelius the centurion who prayed to God always. Acts x, 2.

2. Interrupt your work sometimes to give yourself to prescribed or voluntary acts of devotion, as David, and Daniel, who, overladen with work, as they were, prayed to God seven times a day.

III. When you have finished your work,

1. Endeavor to compose your mind after its distraction. "The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things." Wisd. ix, 15. We should, so to say, cast out the tackling of your soul, as the tackling of the ship is cast out that it may not sink. Act. xxvi, 19. Take for your model Christ, who retired into remote places, after having dwelt among men and performed the task of the day.

2. Leave the success to God. "Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat * * * For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." Mt. vi, 25-32. "Be not solicitous about any thing : but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God." Philip. iv, 6.

Tobias comforted his wife when she was troubled about the uncertain fate of her son in a remote country : "Hold thy peace, and be not troubled ; our son is safe : that man with whom we sent him is very trusty." Tob. x, 6.

3. Increase your confidence in God, in your father's affection. "It is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God." Ps. lxxii, 28. "Who adheres to the Lord, is one spirit with him."

Peroration : These are the preventive remedies against the seed of God's word being choked in your soul. By employing them you are entitled to hope without hesitation for your reward in a better world.

Tirinus.

IV. THE PAINS OF HELL.

“He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” But there are many who will not hear the word of God, wherefore it will bring no fruit in their hearts. And where the word of God produces no wheat, there cockle will grow. But he that hath ears to hear, let him hear, that the “cockle will be gathered up and bound up in bundles to burn.” Let him hear the most earnest word of God, which I am to announce to him this day, the word which forewarns him of the pains of hell.

The pains of Hell are commonly divided into “the pain of sense,” and “the pain of loss.”

I. PAIN OF SENSE.

There are many evils in the world: diseases, dungeons, tortures, degraded society, poverty, famine, etc. In hell the words of the Lord are verified: “I will heap evils upon them, and will spend my arrows among them.” Deut. xxxii, 23. Horrible truth! All senses of man will suffer, suffer for ever, suffer the greatest of pains.

1. His eyes suffer. *a.* How terrific is the sight of hell! Black darkness, which our Lord calls exterior darkness. The devils, degraded spirits, millions of weeping and despairing men; lightnings, fire and brimstone. *b.* Those eyes suffer which were created for the vision of Jesus Christ, of heaven, of the saints. *c.* Those eyes which were accustomed to luxury and refinement. Mark the contrast between now and formerly.

2. His ears hear nothing but howling and gnashing of teeth, cursing, madness, blasphemies, rattling of flames, the roaring of the devils, the sounding of the thunder, in a place where there is no order, but everlasting abomination.

3. The sense of smelling will suffer from devilish stench. “Out of their carcasses shall rise a stink.” Isai. xxxiv, 3. Stench, pestilence and poison from millions of sick, burned, devoured, putrid carcasses! How will you endure it? Their own servants left in their rottenness Herod and Lucius Sylla the bloodhound. Maxentius tied living bodies upon corpses that they might die from the odor. Ye people who live delicately, if you are pre-

pared to endure these and yet greater torments, continue to make your body your god, to despise your sick brethren, and to look with contempt upon religious persons who, like Elias, appear before you in sackcloth.

4. You who are gluttonous, drunkards, violators of the regulations for Lent, come and taste your drink; you know hunger and thirst by experience. Lysimachus sold his crown for a glass of water, Esau his birthright for a mess of potage, Jonathan forfeited his life for a piece of honey. During the siege of Jerusalem the Jews ate leather; women killed their own children to eat them. "The things which before my soul would not touch, now through anguish are my meats." Job vi, 7. How devouring then will be the hunger, how burning the thirst in hell! "Their wine is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps, which is incurable." Deut. xxxii, 33. The tongue set on fire will ask Father Abraham for a drop of water, but to no purpose.

5. All these pains, great as they are, appear as a mere trifle if compared with the pains of the sense of touch by reason of the devouring fire. (A burning coal, a burning limb of the body, who could feel it and not despair?) The fire of hell is enkindled by the wrath of the Lord. "Fire and brimstone and storms of wind shall be the portion of their cup." Ps. x, 1. They are buried in the fire. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

Oh! here my voice falters, my hair stands on end, says St. Bernard, all my bones tremble; the judge himself sheds tears over the reprobate city, sweats blood for anguish at the sight of the multitude of condemned. For "hell hath opened her mouth without any bounds." Isai v, 14. Who then can dwell in devouring fire? If thou canst, O lascivious, or calumniating tongue, thou mayest continue to destroy innocence, destroy good names, etc.

II. PAINS OF LOSS.

Although the soul will share the pains of the body, to which she will have been reunited, she, being the nobler part of man,

will suffer in hell particular pains, pains in her understanding, memory and will.

1. Pains in her understanding. *a.* The condemned soul knows that she herself is the cause of her torments. *b.* A beggar finds it easier than does a queen to live in a dungeon. The soul knows her original nobility and dignity.

2. Pains of memory. *a.* It will recall all the days, months, and years of sin. The soul will say with Jonathan: I only tasted a little honey, and now I must die. *b.* Her punishment is so much greater, when she compares her present state with her former one on earth. *c.* Much greater pain is caused by the conviction, "I could have been saved if I only had wanted to be saved." There are so many saints in heaven who received no more grace than I did. How anxious was my heavenly Father to save me! For that purpose he created me! How anxious the eternal Son, who for that purpose became man, sought after me, died for me, etc.? How anxious the Holy Ghost, who so often, by sermons, or by the confessional, etc., spoke to me! But now my place in heaven is occupied by some one else. "And I perish here with hunger!" Lk. xv, 17. Yet I cannot rise and go to my father.

3. And there is the pain of the will. The condemned soul can never attain what she wishes. The Angel of the Apocalypse, setting his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the land, swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no more. No time for penance, confession, etc. Only desperation left, and cursing of the hour when it was announced that a man was born into the world. The condemned soul will suffer from the sight of heaven. "He shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, * * * and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels, and in the sight of the Lamb." Thus Moses was punished for his murmuring. "Thou hast seen it with thy eyes, and shall not pass over to it." Deut. xxxiv. "And the Lord shall divide them." Ps. ii.

Peroration: O Lord, do with me as thou pleasest. Strip me of all earthly goods and attachments; all misfortunes may befall me like the waves of the sea. Only from one calamity deliver me, O Lord, from eternal hell. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Kronenberger.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

III.

NATURE OF MORTAL SIN.

“And he cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” Lk. xviii, 38. The Gospel of this day mentions a spiritual and a bodily blindness. Jesus had for three years explained to his disciples his divine mission, and his passion and death, in plain and unmistakeable words; but their carnal hope for an earthly kingdom of the Messiah had blinded their minds, so that “they understood none of these things.” Besides this spiritual blindness, the Gospel speaks of a certain blind man who sat by the wayside, begging, and cried out, saying: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Both the disciples, and the beggar on the wayside, are the representatives and types of mankind, as Jesus found it when descending down from heaven. It was blind concerning God, and its own origin and destiny. Jesus “was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.” John i, 9. But alas! as “he came into his own, and his own received him not,” so scores of thousands in our days close their eyes against the true light, because they love darkness rather than light; nay they dispute the Christian doctrines, as if they were submitted to the judgment of the human intellect. They scoff especially at what Revelation teaches concerning mortal sin, and as this present season of Lent reminds us so vividly of this mystery of iniquity, I will explain to you what Revelation teaches concerning mortal sin, and what mortal sin is before the judgment seat of the human intellect.

PART I.

LET US FIRST OPEN THE HOLY BOOK, TO SEE WHAT IS SIN IN
THE EYES OF GOD.

1. Raise up your eyes to heaven. With thundering voice God announced, in the beginning of days, to the pure spirits what is the abomination, and what the dreadful punishment o

the prevarication of his commandments. The records of Holy Scripture inform us that the Lord created countless hosts of holy angels. They all were glorious and happy in singing the praise of the Lord. So it was at the beginning of time. If you now lift your eyes up to heaven, you witness a great change. In the ranks of the celestial spirits you see many empty places. Who are those angels who once possessed all this glory? What has become of them? In hell a raging fire burns which will burn for ever. There the worm of an evil conscience gnaws continually at the very heart of its victims. What you see there, is a dark dungeon; what you hear, is howling and gnashing of teeth. Evil spirits, burning with every passion, in their infernal fury appear to be desirous of rendering their abode more horrible still. Who has built this dreadful place? Who has crushed its inmates? Sin has done it. Sin has built hell. Sin has rent heaven. Sin has cast holy angels, those bright stars of heaven, into this abyss of torments. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? * * * Thou saidst in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit." Isai. xiv, 12-15. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but having cast them down into the place of torments delivered them into the chains of hell to be tormented, to be reserved unto judgment" II Pet. ii, 4. One single sin has changed the nature of angels, and cast them for ever down into the place of torments. What must sin be in the sight of God who punishes sin so severely and for ever! "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, who shall stand it?" Ps. cxxix, 3.

2. We perceive the same vestiges of divine justice on the surface of the earth. We cannot suppose that the creation, such as it now is, proceeded from the hands of God. All parts of the world resound with wail and lamentation. Wars and struggles never cease. Man, the king of the universe, enters life amidst

tears ; his days are the days of a laborer, and in agony he returns his soul into the hands of the Creator. "We know that every creature groaneth, and is in labor even till now." Rom. viii, 28.

Holy Scripture tells us that this was not the condition of the creation from the beginning. "And God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good," is the closing remark of the Holy Writer of the creation of the world. Gen. i, 31. Our first parents did not know the sorrows and cares of life. "And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning, wherein he had placed man whom he had formed." Gen. ii, 8. What has destroyed the original order of nature, and caused the misery of mankind? Holy Scripture answers: "By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." Rom. v, 12. "The creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of him that made it subject in hope." viii, 20. What a dreadful thing must sin be in the sight of God, since one single sin has made the whole human family unhappy? "If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand it?"

2. If you want to know what is sin, accompany me to Golgotha. Behold your Saviour hanging on the cross, his hands and feet nailed on the tree of malediction, his heart pierced through. "I am a worm and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head." Ps. xxi, 7, 8. "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow." Lam. i, 12. In his anguish he cried with a loud voice, saying: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mt. xxvii, 46. Why is it, O great and merciful God, that thy beloved Son suffers so great torments? Hear the answer of the Holy Ghost: "Surely he hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we were healed." Isai. liii, 4, 5. "He bore our sins in his body upon the tree." I Pet. ii, 24. Before the voice

of the Cross denouncing sin all the world must keep silent. Let us repent of our sins. "If in the green wood they do these things: what shall be done in the dry?" Lk. xxiii, 31.

PART II.

OUR FEAR OF SIN WILL INCREASE BY REFLECTING ON WHAT NATURAL REASON TEACHES US WITH REGARD TO IT.

1. Sin, when considered in the light of reason, is a frivolous *revolt* against the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. To one will all creation is subject, from the sand on the sea shore to the Seraph standing before the throne of God. It is the will of our Lord. "O, Lord, my God, thou art exceedingly great, who stretchest out the heaven like a pavilion; who coverest the higher rooms thereof with water. Who makest the clouds thy chariot, who walketh upon the wings of the winds. Who makest thy angels spirits, and thy ministers a burning fire. Who hast founded the earth upon its own basis; it shall not be moved for ever and ever. The deep like a garment is its clothing; above the mountains shall the waters stand. At thy rebuke they shall flee; at the voice of thy thunder they shall fear." Ps. ciii, 1 ff. Wind, and storm, thunder and lighting, the waters and the earth harken to his voice. "He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names." Ps. cxlvi, 4. And as visible nature, so the world of spirits obeys him. "The four and twenty ancients fell down before him that sitteth on the throne," etc. Apoc. iv. 10. Man alone makes an exception. He says to the Lord: "I will not serve, I defy thee. My will and desire must be fulfilled; my passions are above thy commandments." Do you understand now the words which the Lord spoke to give utterance to his astonishment at sin? "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this; and ye gates thereof, be very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jerem. ii, 12, 13.

2. Sin is also an enormous *ingratitude*. How many are the benefits of God from the moment of your creation up to this

day? Who can count the spiritual blessings, the death of God's Son for our salvation, the holy sacraments, etc.? These blessings and benefits are so great and numerous that God, seeing the ingratitude of those whose body and soul he has nourished with ineffable care, exclaimed: "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children and exalted them; but they have despised me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood." Isai i, 2-3.

3. Sin appears as the "mysery of iniquity" in the strictest sense from the following consideration. Jesus Christ has imparted to us a supernatural life. In our soul he has built a world far more magnificent than heaven and earth. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost abide in our soul, and "the charity of God is poured out into our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." Rom. v, 5. By sin the most admirable work of Jesus Christ is destroyed; the divine sonship is robbed; the temple of the Holy Ghost is reduced to ruins, and the precious blood of Jesus Christ and its fruits trampled under foot. "Not only as man, but as child of God you sin," says St. Chrosostom. Do you now understand why penitent Saints have led a life full of tears, self-denial, mortification, and works of penance to atone for a few sins they had committed?

Peroration: None of us can plead any excuse before the divine judgment seat. If you are blind, it is your own doing. You know what sin is, and where it leads to. Therefore avoid sin, if you desire to enter into the Celestial Jerusalem.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

ON HEAVEN.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem to witness once more the Sacred Passion of our Lord. For the time is approaching when the commemoration of the sufferings of Jesus will induce us to

repent of our sins, and thus to gain heaven. As Jesus Christ, after he was delivered up to the Gentiles, and mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, and put to death, and on the third day rose again; so shall we, after going through the tribulation of penance, and through the horrors of death, rise again after a little while, and attain the precious part which neither world nor hell shall take away from us. Come with me to meditate at the approaching time of penance on the joys of heaven, that they may encourage you to persevere on the path of virtue. The joys of heaven affect body and soul.

PART I.

JOYS OF THE BODY.

Our body being the companion of the soul in her warfare, it is but just that it should partake of the heavenly reward. In the lives of the Saints we read that God, in order to reward certain virtues exercised by certain limbs of their body, did not suffer them to undergo corruption. (The tongue of St. John Nepomucen, the heart of St. Therese.) Rejoice then mortal flesh, thou shalt partake of the glories of the soul the companion of your labors and afflictions.

I. The joys of our eyes. They cannot be satisfied with things on earth, although the natural and artificial beauties of visible things are so great and manifold. But the eye will be satisfied in heaven. We are to see the glorified bodies of the Saints, of the Blessed Virgin, of Jesus Christ, of the eternal city of God in its supernatural splendor. St. Paul was exalted into the third heaven, and so great was his delight that he did not know, whether he was within or without his body. I will resign all earthly joys and worldly pleasures, if I only may see you, Saints of heaven. Shed, my eyes, tears of penance that you may shine like the stars of heaven!

II. Ye my ears, docile disciples of God's word, rejoice: for you heaven has its delights, too. "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures and the ancients, and the number of them was thousands of thousands,"

Apoc. v, 8. O my God what is the song of Holy Angels? We know of Saints who at the moment of departing this life heard the angels sing, and although dying appeared to be in heaven. St. Francis of Assisi was restored to consciousness and strength by the voices of Holy Angels. We shall hear the canticles of the Virgins' choir, and of all the Saints. Such is the reward for endurance of calumny, for promoting God's honor, for sacred songs and prayers!

III. The sense of smell. If from the tombs of martyrs the sweetest odor arose, the Saints of heaven will breath balsamic air. Cf. Eccles. cp. xxiv.

IV. The sense of taste will be satisfied and refreshed in many ways, though the elect will neither eat nor drink, so that to them the words of Scripture may be applied: "He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent away empty." Lk. i, 53.

V. The feeling will have its reward in the best health, absence of pain, heat and cold, etc. Besides, according to I Cor. xv, 42-44 we distinguish four qualities of the glorified bodies, 1. The body is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption: *i. e.*, incapable of corruption, and of any suffering. 2. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory, *i. e.*, shining with glory, without spot or blemish. 3. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power, *i. e.*, capable of transporting itself with the soul in an instant from one place to another. 4. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body, *i. e.*, spiritualized, or capable of penetrating any corporeal substance, like our Saviour's body after his Resurrection.

Be gone then, lust of the flesh! my delight is in heaven. Endure, my soul, the afflictions of mortal life; all sacrifices shall be rewarded even in regard to the body. By how much greater will be the joys of the soul?

PART II.

JOYS OF THE SOUL.

I. Joys of the understanding. Human understanding searches after truth under great disability. The Saints see in the

light of glory the mysteries of God, and all human science. That is the reward of faith.

II. Joys of the memory. It will not be burdened with contrition for the past life, nor with uncertainty about the future. It will rejoice over penance performed, over the struggles of this life, the dispositions of Providence, the temptations of the devil, etc.

III. Joys of the will. The insatiable will will be at rest. "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." Ps. xvi, 15. In heaven you find (1) riches, honor, splendid gardens and palaces, arts and sciences, and gracious faces. (2) The best society, the holiest men and women, the best friends who know no envy or selfishness. No separation is to be feared. (3) The vision of God. The queen of Saba fainted at the sight of Solomon on his throne. Jesus attracted the shepherds, his disciples who followed him, the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, Mary Magdalen, the three disciples on Thabor, etc. When Moses had seen the Almighty in a figure, his face was shining. So much more delightful is the vision of God whom no man in his mortal flesh can see and live. We shall see him as he is.

Peroration: It is time to make an end of this boldness. Can man paint the sun with earthly colors? Describe what no eye has seen, no ear has heard? St. Jerome appeared after his death to St. Augustine when the latter was writing of the celestial joys, and said: What seekest thou? Dost thou believe that thou couldst compress the ocean in thy hand? Endeavor rather to reach heaven. Oh! let us seek what is above, where Christ is. Though we should be spit upon, mocked and scourged with Jesus, after a little while we are to rise again with him.

Kronenberger.

First Sunday of Lent.

III.

ON THE VALUE OF OUR SOUL.

“He showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and he said to him: All these will I give thee, if, falling down thou wilt adore me.” Mt. iv, 8. Satan offers to our Saviour all the splendor of the world, if he would once fall down and adore him. Jesus will not suffer the devil to tempt him any longer, but sends him off saying. “Begone Satan!” This teaches us that we should prefer our immortal soul to all the goods of this world. How many Christians, how many even of you need to reflect on this doctrine, on the value of the soul! For, if you know the infinite value of your soul, how can it be explained that you sell your soul daily for a mess of pottage, or even at a lower price? Pay, then, good attention to-day. I will prove that you ought to entertain the greatest reverence for your soul, *first*, because she is infinitely precious, and *secondly*, because all our welfare depends on her salvation.

PART I.

OUR SOUL IS INFINITELY PRECIOUS.

1. If you could see your soul, you would willingly concede her all preference to earthly beauty. But being a pure spirit, you cannot see her in herself. From the visible beauty and amiable perfections of man you can, however, draw inferences regarding the beauty and perfection of your soul; all beauty and charms of your body being but reflecting beams of your soul. You often admire the beauty of persons whom you meet. From a dead human body all beauty has vanished. Is this not a proof that all beauty of the body is communicated to it by the soul? And all those accomplishments which render man distinguished and amiable, as wisdom, eloquence, valor, etc., are they not qualities of his soul? If a dark cloud, when driven by the wind against the sun, becomes beautiful, radiant and splendid, we infer with certainty that the sun himself is far more beautiful, radiant and splendid. With the same reason we draw the conclusion, from

the external beauty and perfection of man, of the greater beauty and perfection of his soul.

2. Why dwell on such and similar reasonings, since faith preaches to us the exceedingly great beauty of our soul? I mention only three great prerogatives:

The *first* is the peculiar manner of her creation. How were heaven and earth, the sun moon and stars created? By the all-powerful word: Fiat. "He spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created." Ps. cxviii, 5. How was our body formed? "The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth." Gen. ii, 7. How was the soul created? Her origin is the very heart of God. "He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

The *second* is that, of all creatures, only the angels and the human soul were sealed with the divine image; so that, whilst the other created beings only show the traces of one or other of the divine perfections, our souls, like the angels of God, bear, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, the image of both the divine nature and the Trinity of the divine persons. Now, if all beings, on account of the beam of divine perfection reflected in them, are so much loved by God, according to the testimony of the Holy Ghost: "Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest nothing of what thou hast created;" how much more must he love our soul, in which he finds not only the trace of his divinity, but his own self, so to say, in splendor and brightness?

The *third* is, because God descended from heaven, to seek the soul, when she was lost. "O soul! thou art of great value indeed, since the Son of God himself, to seek thee, descended from the highest heaven into this depth." St. Bernard. Moreover, he purchased her at the price of his own precious blood. "The soul, I say with St. Bernard, is truly something great, something precious, since Christ has purchased her with all his blood." Oh! my God, how little do we, thy children, appreciate the value of our souls! How true are the words of the prophet: "I have given my dear soul into the hand of her enemies." Jerem. xii, 7. Enquire of your Creator the value of your soul. "Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels." Ps. viii, 6. En-

quire of your Redeemer, who will answer you through his apostle :
 "Christ hath delivered himself for us." Eph. v. 2.

PART II.

ALL GOOD THINGS ARE DEPENDENT ON THE SALVATION OF OUR
 SOUL.

Anna, the mother of young Tobias, exaggerated, when she said with regard to her son : " We having all things together in thee alone, ought not to have let thee go from us." x, 6. Henry VIII. the English pseudo-reformer, was far from exaggerating, when on his death bed he said : " Friends, all is lost; I have lost my soul, and with her everything." And indeed, whosoever loses his soul, loses everything.

1. Heaven, God, the source of all happiness, is lost to us in consequence of sin.

2. Therefore the devil offers us everything in exchange for our soul, as we read in to-day's Gospel.

3. Still do you not prefer to your soul earthly advantages, as a small profit by working on Holy Days without necessity, or by cheating your neighbor, etc? The citizens of Dunkirk in Flanders were often compelled to make a compromise with the besiegers of their city. The first point of the agreement inviolable secured to them the beautiful picture of St. Sebastian in their cathedral. You would do in like manner, if you valued your soul, the image and likeness of God, as it deserves.

PART III.

IT IS AN ARDUOUS TASK TO SAVE YOUR SOUL.

1. You never doubted that many Christians will be lost for ever, which seems to prove that the salvation of our soul is not so easy.

2. Why is it that our Lord commands us so earnestly to make good use of the talents confided to us; that he recommends so urgently constant vigilance, and excludes the slothful from his wedding feast?

3. It is the doctrine of the Church that perfect contrition in itself, and imperfect contrition, or attrition, in the sacrament of penance, remit our sins. None the less is it a lamentable fact, that many sinners, deferring their conversion to the end of their

lives, have neither contrition nor attrition for their sins. They are as Absalom who, hanging by the hair on the oak tree, might have saved himself by cutting off his hair with his sword. But his evil conscience blinded him, and rendered him indifferent to his own salvation. "Strive for justice for thy soul (during thy whole lifetime), and even unto death fight for justice." Eccles. iv, 33.

4. If it be so, father, as you preach, I hear you say, there is little hope for our salvation. If we consult the past, we find many sins, and few good works in all our lives; and if we consider the present state of our souls, we see at once that it is not better than in bygone days. To be sincere, I fear that, if you continue being careless in regard to your salvation as heretofore, it will go ill with many of you. Did not our Lord say: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent bear it away?" Mt. xi, 12. Do you use violence by earnestly stilling your passions? It is a revealed truth that those who resemble Jesus Christ in their lives, are the chosen ones: "Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son." Rom. viii, 29. Examine your life, if it be according to the life of Christ, if you are patient, ready to forgive, chaste, zealous in prayer, etc.

Verily, the salvation of our soul is a great and arduous task: we have this treasure, our soul, in earthen vessels. II Cor. iv, 7.

Peroration: When Dositheus, being a mere boy of very delicate health, asked St. Dorotheus to receive him among his monks, the other monks said with one accord, he was not fit for the arduous life of the inhabitants of the desert. Whereupon the holy youth answered: "I will save my soul;" which words he repeated as often as he was reminded of the divers hardships of monastic life. He was received at last, and by continually renewing his resolutions to save his soul, he attained a high degree of sanctity. Such must be your resolution also, if you desire to be saved. You must make this resolution without delay. And whenever obstacles come in your way, never give up overcoming them. "I will save my soul," be your device.

J. B. Campadelli.

IV.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR TEMPTATIONS.

The Gospel of this day which represents our Lord as being tempted by the devil, reminds us of our temptations. Wherefore it seems not out of the way to make some instructive remarks about temptations in general. From this copious subject I select a three-fold truth, a three-fold advantage, and a three-fold practical rule.

I. A THREE-FOLD TRUTH.

1. The life of man upon earth is a continual warfare or temptation. Job. vii, 1. The struggle is vehement in proportion to our zeal in the service of God. "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, * * prepare thy soul for temptation." Eccles. ii, 1; II Tim. iii, 12. It will last unto death. Eccles. iv. 33.

2. No temptation, wherever it may come from, or however great it may be, is so strong that man can not resist it. In no case does God refuse his grace. I Cor. x, 13. II Pet. ii, 7. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Mt. vi, 13, cf. Trid. vi, cap. 11.

3. Not the spontaneous commotion of concupiscence, but the assent of your will is sin. You do not fall into sin before you assent. One determined act of yours will put your enemies to flight. "So long as the devil does not cease knocking at the door of your heart, it is a sign that he has not entered yet." St. Francis de Sales. "Sin is so voluntary that if it be not voluntary, it is no sin." St. Augustine.

II. A THREE-FOLD ADVANTAGE.

1. Self-knowledge. What self-love conceals, temptations uncover: domestic and external foes, your own frailty, and attacks from all sides. Wherefore temptations effect (*a*) humiliation before God, from whom alone help can come. *b*. They caution against the dangers from outside. *c*. Watchfulness over ourselves. Eccles. xxxiv, 9. II Cor. xii, 7. "Where pride is, there also shall be reproach: but where humility is, there also is wisdom." Prov. xi, 2.

2. Perfection in virtue. God allows temptation to come for probation of the virtue and fidelity of his servants. "Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn my reins and my heart." Ps. xxv, 2. Eccles. ii, 5. Tob. xii, 13. The greater your resistance against temptation, the greater freshness, strength and, splendor will be imparted to your virtue, which was heretofore untried and less trustworthy.

3. The splendor of the crown. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath provided to them that love him." James i, 12. Apoc. iii, 5, 12. In proportion to the vehemence of the temptation or the length of the struggle will be the brightness of the crown. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Apoc. ii, 10. Even on earth he that overcomes is often rewarded with great consolations, as Jesus was consoled. Mt. iv, 11.

III. A THREE-FOLD PRACTICAL RULE.

1. Trust in God, not in yourself. It is not yourself but grace that will overcome. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip iv, 13. Susanna, Dan. xiii, 35. Christ is our leader who gave us the example and strength to resist. He is the one who came upon him who was armed, and overcame him Lk. xi, 22; who cries out to us: "Have confidence: I have overcome the world." John xvi, 33. Yet the Lord who "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation (II Pet. ii, 9) requires you to ask him for his help, and at the same time not to neglect yourself. "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Mt. xxvi, 41.

2. Resist the temptations from the beginning. A little spark is soon put out. See St. Francis de Sales, *Philothea* iv, chapter 6, etc.

3. Conceal nothing in confession. God intends to lead us by men, and our enemy is discouraged, when his manifestations are discovered.

Peroration: Fight the good fight with perseverance, and the time will come when you will say with the Apostle: "Thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Scherer.

Second Sunday of Lent.

III.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF MAN.

“And he was transfigured before them.” Mt.^{xvii}, 2. Jesus by manifesting his glory on Mount Tabor, manifests our future glory also. For we are to be transfigured with him in soul and body. To partake of this glorious transfiguration, another transfiguration or change must take place in our mortal life, the change from the state of sin into the state of grace. These happy *changes* are often supplanted by two other changes, namely, from the state of grace into the state of sin, and from the joys of this world into the torments of hell. Whilst by the first two changes we partake of the virtue and glory of Jesus Christ, we partake by the other changes of the sin and punishment of Satan. Let us consider these four changes.

I. THE CHANGE FROM THE STATE OF GRACE INTO THE STATE OF SIN.

God has represented this horrible change in Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, whose revolt against God was punished with a striking humiliation. Driven away from among men, he dwelt seven years with cattle and wild beasts. (Dan. iv). The Holy Fathers describe this dreadful state according to the Bible.

1. Deprived of the use of reason, he could employ only his imagination, which, however, was so perverted that he considered himself transformed into an ox, and supposed himself to possess all the qualities of an ox. For thus runs the sentence pronounced against him: “Let his heart be changed from man’s; and let a beast’s heart be given him.” Dan. iv, 13. In like manner, the sinner makes no use of the light given him from above, not regarding Christian decency, but only searching after his amusements. The Apostle calls the sinner appropriately “darkness:” “You were heretofore darkness.” Eph. v. 8.

2. His body had no desire but for brutish actions. The

sinner becomes so habituated to sin, that in consequence of the perversity of his will he is regarded as an animal rather than as man; wherefore God calls him no longer man, but merely "flesh:" "My spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh." Gen. vi, 3. In other places of Holy Writ, sinners are called horses, because of their ferocity; swine, because of their impurity; wolves, because of their voracity.

3. Nabuchodonosor spoke no articulate sounds, but only animal sounds. The sinner finds no delight in conversation, except it be like what the conversation of animals would be if they could speak, namely about the idols of their passions: lust, gold, liquor, etc.

4. Nabuchodonosor resembled in his shape an animal rather than a man: his skin being hardened, his body being wet with the dew of heaven; his hairs growing like the feathers of eagles, and his nails like birds' claws. As to the sinner, his countenance bears the traces of his excesses. The intemperate, unchaste, avaricious. His conscience is hardened. His body is destitute of all decency, being attached to creatures, so much so, as to be to others the object of laughter and disgust.

5. The King ate grass like an ox. The sinner does the same, by despising wholesome food:—the word of God, holy sacraments, virtues and good examples; and seeking animal food for his immortal soul:—extravagant dress, gold, unchaste words, calumnies, etc. Thus the Christian, once a temple of the Holy Ghost, becomes a den of thieves, an unprofitable abode.

II. CHANGE FROM THE STATE OF SIN INTO THE STATE OF GRACE.

This change is represented by Joseph of Egypt, who was delivered from the dungeon, and exalted to the dignity of a prince. From extreme misery, he was transformed to the highest earthly honor and glory. The sinner, who was before tied with the fetters of sin, sighing under the power of the devil, is, by penance, suddenly changed into God's child.

1. The King of Egypt put upon Joseph a white silken robe. This robe represents divine grace, which created by God, adorns

man with heavenly beauty ; so that all the splendor of nature, charming as it is, appears insignificant in comparison with the soul in the state of sanctifying grace. No stars adorn heaven, no precious stones adorn a kingly crown, as grace adorns the soul. St. Catharine of Siena, after having seen a soul in the state of grace, asserted the possession of sanctifying grace to be worth a thousand deaths.

2. The king took the ring from his own finger and put it upon Joseph's. The justified sinner performs virtuous acts, which by the grace of God are gilded, *i. e.*, become meritorious. He who cursed and swore before, now becomes reconciled to God by prayer. He who was proud before, is now humble, etc.

3. The king put round his neck a chain of gold. The merits, dead in consequence of sin, revive by sanctifying grace, forming a most beautiful chain of golden rings.

4. The king made him go up into his chariot, signifying the peace of conscience, by which the soul is pleasantly borne along.

5. A herald went before Joseph, saying aloud : " Let all the people bow their knee before Joseph." The sinner, when converted, regains his good reputation, and attains a name of honor, as St. Mary Magdalen, who, being once a sinner, became the intimate friend of Jesus, and was praised and honored by all Christians. We observe the same change in St. Matthew, Paul, Zacheus, Peter, Margarita of Cortona and many others, whose sins are not remembered except to increase their glory.

This is the change to which the Prophet Amos exhorts us, saying : " Seek him that turneth darkness into morning." Amos v, 8. What else is the state of sin but darkness, which is changed into the golden rosy morn of sanctifying grace ? Another example of this change is the Prodigal Son.

III. THE CHANGE FROM THE JOYS OF THIS LIFE INTO HELL.

Samson is a figure of this change. After having lost his hair through Dalila's deceit, and his strength with it, the Philistines seized him with great fury.

1. They put out his eyes. Because he had looked with desire at strange women, says St. Jerome, darkness came over him. Dense night, external darkness is the first degree of this hellish change, which all those undergo who loved darkness rather than light, and those who abused the light of their eyes to excite ignominious desires.

2. They took him to Gaza, being the remotest of the cities in the land of the Philistines. Hell is far from heaven, far from God. "Besides," says Abraham to the Rich Man, "there is between us and you a great chaos."

3. They fettered him with chains, and shut him up in prison. The condemned will remain in the same spot of the same prison for ever.

4. "They made him grind" so that he had to turn the mill-wheel incessantly. Dreadful punishment! Infinitely more dreadful is the punishment of those who are condemned to turn incessantly the wheel of eternity. "The voice of thunder is in the wheel." Ps. lxxvi, 19.

5. They made him the butt of their sneers and scornful laughter. He was forced to play for them at their feasts. The devils scoff at the condemned, and these scoff at one another. Especially those who were once in the right path, converting perhaps others, will be made a laughing-stock.

IV. THE HAPPIEST CHANGE IS THE TRANSFER FROM THE MISERY OF THIS WORLD INTO THE STATE OF CELESTIAL GLORY.

Only the just can expect this happy change, according to the apostle: "We shall indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed." I Cor. xv, 51. This change of the just is represented by the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

1. "His face did shine as the sun." This is a figure of the beatific vision, by which alone the blessed souls are perfectly happy.

2. "His garments became white as snow," by which the brightness of the blessed souls and their bodies is intimated.

3. The voice of the Father was heard: "This is my beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him." This sweet voice of the Father may remind us of the joys of our senses.

4. "Behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias." The society in heaven will be pleasant, exquisite, varied and splendid.

"A bright cloud overshadowed them." The elect will be bright in their risen bodies. They will pass from darkness into the intuition of God.

Peroration: When the mother of the saint martyr Astion asked of Vigilantius, how that region was named, where her most beloved and only Astion was gone, he answered: "This city is the land of heroes." Upon the inquiry of the mother, whether there were yet other men, Vigilantius answered: Many and very noble men are there; and their possession is called paradise. Their mansions are built of light, their life is God. On their heads they wear crowns of the purest gold with divers precious stones. There is a mighty king in this city, whose name is God of gods, Lord of lords. (Then he described the city itself according to Apoc. xxi.) Oh! that we may partake of this transfiguration through him who was to-day transfigured on Tabor, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth one God with the Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever.

M. Faber.

IV.

HEAVEN AND WORLD.

Jesus brings his disciples up into the mountain of Tabor to give them, by his transfiguration, a foretaste of the happiness that is in store for them, if they, faithful to their vocation and after the example of their master despising the World, follow the way of the Cross leading to heaven. The same eternal happiness is promised to us under the same conditions. And that this our hope may not be frustrated, let us often call to mind Heaven, and despise the World.

PART I.

BY REMEMBERING HEAVEN, WE ARE INDUCED TO DESPISE THE
WORLD.

Heaven is represented to our mind

1. As the most precious good in comparison with the goods of the World, which are vain and perishable; a sufficient motive for despising them. "The things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal." II Cor. iv, 18. "I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall appear." Ps. xvi, 15. This thought is a powerful means of resisting the allurements of Satan, who approaches us, as once he approached Jesus with the offer: "All these will I give thee, if falling down, thou wilt adore me." Mt. iv, 9. Moses made use of this means with the best success: "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of the Egyptians: for he looked unto the reward." Heb. xi, 26. David: "I have inclined my heart to do thy justifications for ever, for the reward." Ps. cxviii, 112. The youngest of the Machabees at the exhortation of his pious mother. "I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth," etc. Mach. vii, 23.

2. As the most necessary good—which is a cogent motive for despising the world. All its treasures can not render you happy. "But one thing is necessary." Lk. x, 42. To be deprived of this one thing would involve everlasting misery. "It were better for that man, if he had not been born." Mt. xxvi, 24. David though holding the royal sceptre in his hand asked one thing of the Lord: "This I will seek after * * * that I may see the delight of the Lord." Ps. xxvi, 4, 5.

3. As a good exclusive of all other inclinations and desires, an incontestable motive for perfectly and constantly despising the world. "He that does not sigh as a stranger, can not rejoice as a citizen." St. Augustine. The Saints were convinced thereof, and it is the longing for heaven that populated the deserts with hermits "of whom the world was not worthy: wandering in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." Heb. xi, 38.

PART II.

BY HOLDING THE VANITY OF THE WORLD WE ARE EXHORTED
TO WORK FOR HEAVEN.

Nothing tends more toward increasing our desire for everlasting happiness than our being convinced of the folly of craving for the false goods of this world.

1. Men of the world are exceedingly anxious for the goods of this world, whilst we are so indifferent to the heavenly treasures. The reverse should be the case.

a. The desire for earthly things is disgraceful. Ambition for glory, etc., is concealed, sometimes even under the cover of modesty. But to long for heaven is honorable. St. Paul expresses publicly: "I pursue towards the mark, for the prize of supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus." Philp. iii, 14.

b. The desire for earthly things is useless, because it is the source of inquietude of mind, whilst the desire for heaven causes peace of mind, inward consolation, etc., and always promotes our welfare. "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." Philip. i, 23.

2. Worldly men devote all their energies to the service of the world, and yet so lazy and careless are we in striving for heaven. Yet they work for uncertain and perishable wages. "The shall sow wind, and reap a whirl-wind" Osee viii, 7, whilst we work for an infinite everlasting reward.

Peroration: Men of the world are so bitterly grieved at the loss of earthly goods. O that we would shed tears for the loss of heaven! It is by the sadness of contrition that we regain heaven.

Segaud.

Third Sunday of Lent.

III. ON RELAPSING INTO SIN.

“Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first.” Lk. xi, 26. What is the temptation of the devil but a continual attempt to return to the soul from which he was expelled! The evil spirit, being cast out of the human soul in consequence of true penance, “walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding, he saith: “I will return into my house, whence I came out.” v, 24. Relapsing into your former sins is therefore the greatest calamity that can befall you. “Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first.” As you are to make your Easter confession, let me warn you, how dreadful a thing it is to relapse into former sins.

I. RELAPSING INTO SIN IS THE GREATEST INGRATITUDE.

In warning you against committing the same sins again and again, I do not allude at present to venial sins, though they are the second greatest evil in God's creation; but I intend to speak of mortal sins only. What shall I say of a man, who repented of his sins, perhaps with burning tears in his eyes, and obtained forgiveness, but committed the same grievous sins again, perhaps a few days later? Is he not guilty of the blackest ingratitude?

1. It is the work of grace only, if our Lord, after we have committed a sin, receives us back into his house. Horrible is the devastation of sin in our soul. Poor and wretched, deprived of all beauty and merits, we stand like the prodigal son outside of his father's house, cast out of the kingdom of God, like Adam of old, whom the Lord had cast out of paradise. If we should depart life in sin, we shall be lost for ever. And when we knocked at the door of our father's house, did he not meet us

with a cheerful countenance and embrace us tenderly? Has he not renewed his friendship, returned the white robe of heavenly grace, put a ring on our hand, and shoes on our feet, and prepared a banquet for our sake?

2. What would you say of the prodigal son, if, shortly after the banquet, he had left his father's house again, thrown away the ring and shoes, and trodden under foot the first robe; if he had abused the presents of his father by new offences? It would have been shameless ingratitude, you say. Well, you are this son, whenever you relapse into sin.

3. As the physician is filled with scorn of a sick person, whom he had healed after great care, and who by disobedience had plunged himself into peril of death again, so the heavenly physician will depart from a soul, which repeatedly commits the same sins again. "We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed: let us forsake her, and let us go every man to his own land: because her judgment hath reached even to the heavens, and is lifted up to the clouds." Jerem. li, 9. The grace of God will recede from the ungrateful sinner, and the word of the Lord will be fulfilled in him. "I go my way, and you shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin." John viii, 21.

II. RELAPSING INTO SIN IS THE GREATEST FOLLY.

The oftener you relapse into your wonted sins, the more difficult it is to extricate yourselves from them. The power of sin over our heart increases with every new sin, the strength of our will relaxes, and the time for conversion is getting shorter.

1. Sin is like a disease which becomes more perilous by repeated attacks. It is as if a deplorable inclination to the old evil were formed in the body. When your friend is repeatedly struck with apoplexy, you lose your hope of his recovery. By committing the same sin again and again, our soul and sometimes our bodies, contract an inclination for it. Do we not act like fools, when we strengthen evil inclinations by repeated relapses into sin? I should have supposed that the power of sin over our feeble soul is great enough anyhow. "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." John viii, 34. "Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." v, 14.

2. In proportion as the power of sin increases, the strength of man's will decreases. The relapsed loses confidence in himself, until falling into desperation, he gives himself up to all vices. How often do we meet such poor sinners whose frequent relapses have made them so weak, as to lead them to despair of their own power of resisting, and of divine grace !

3. The time for conversion is getting shorter and shorter. No sinner expects to meet his eternal judge in the state of sin ; every one hopes to become converted before his death ; and made bold by this hope, he dares to commit new sins.

But is not this a foolish hope ? Time passes away as swiftly as the arrow of the bow well bent. How can you stake your hope on an uncertain future ? The son of man cometh as a thief at night in a time when we expect him not. If sin is our only true evil, you act very imprudently in rendering its power greater, and your will more feeble. The unclean spirit will not merely return into the house, whence he came out, but will live in undisturbed peace in the soul of the relapsed ; he and seven other spirits ; he and as many evil spirits, as the relapsed, despairing of his conversion, commits more sins. With regard to such a wretched sinner, our Lord says : " And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."

III. WHAT WILL BE THIS LAST STATE?—RELAPSE IS THE FORERUNNER OF ETERNAL PERDITION.

Conversion depends partly on the good will of the sinner, partly on the grace of God. We have seen that the strength of will relaxes with every fresh sin, and therefore the relapsed can not rely on it. And the greatest energy alone can not perform the work of conversion. " It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Rom. ix, 16. Without a full measure of grace the conversion of the relapsed is impossible.

1. It is to be feared that the ordinary graces will produce no effect upon him. God by his grace shows to the sinner the deformity of sin, terrifies him by its consequences and punish-

ment, and endeavors to gain his affections by pointing out to him the infiniteness of the divine charity. But if man continually relapses into his old sins, are these motives likely to make a lasting impression on him? The same motives that did not at first deter him from his sins?

When Israel went out of Egypt, "the Lord went before them to show the way by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire; that he might be the guide of their journey at both times." Exod. xiii, 21. Cloud and pillar were to remind incessantly the children of Israel of God's love and care for them. Nevertheless, once used to these wonderful guides, they grumbled against God. Such is man. Man becomes used to everything, especially to a state of sin; and by relapsing into sin, he becomes even indifferent to the most sacred and urgent warnings of God.

2. Or are we entitled to expect from God extraordinary graces for the relapsing sinner? Should God show greater mercy towards us, because we have been so ungrateful to him? When we continually tear open old wounds, think you the Heavenly Physician of our souls will prepare us a stronger remedy? Or is there rather reason to fear the words of the Prophet being fulfilled in us: "Thus saith the Lord: Thy bruise is incurable, thy wound is very grievous. Thou hast no healing medicines." John xxx, 12, 13. Incurable was the wound of Israel, incurable the wound of Pharaoh, because they despised the divine warnings.

Peroration: "Remain in me, and I in you," says the Lord. John xv, 4. After having found the grace of God by sincere penance, let us persevere in his grace. "If any one remaineth not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire; and he burneth." v, 6. With all the energy of our will supported by divine grace, let us be living branches of the true Vine Jesus Christ, and let us not lose his grace by relapsing into sin. "Seize and embrace penance, as a shipwrecked man seizes a piece of wood." Tertullian.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SIN OF IMPURITY.

It is true that, in general, by the "unclean spirit," the spirit of wickedness is understood who is sowing his fatal seed in the whole world. In particular the "unclean spirit" is the spirit of impurity, the ghastly demon who is raging among men so much the more dreadfully, as little attention is paid to him. What desolation of abomination is caused by the sin of impurity!

PART I.

THIS SIN BEREAVES MAN OF HIS EARTHLY GOODS.

I. Of his honor. Lewdness is followed by infamy at once.

1. The man given to impurity is aware of it himself. Abhorring he himself tries

a. To conceal his infamous actions and (b) to excuse them in all possible ways.

2. It is proved by the conduct of others. The lewd man is despised and avoided; his friends and kin are ashamed of him.

3. Holy Scripture teaches the same. "He that is an adulterer * * * gathereth to himself shame and dishonor, and his reproach shall not be blotted out." Prov. vi, 32, 33. "Fornication and all uncleanness let it not so much as be named among you." Eph. v, 3.

II. Of his property.

1. You will be convinced thereof by looking at things as they are. The unclean person adorns the idol he adores; he neglects his duties of life, the care of his household. His mind is intent upon satisfying his base passions, to gratify which he spares no sacrifice.

2. Holy Scripture confirms it by word and example. "He that maintaineth harlots, shall squander away his substance." Prov. xxix, 3. Call to mind the history of the prodigal son. Lk. xv. "Was it not for the price of a momentary lust that Ruben lost all the goods of his birthright?" St. Augustine.

3. Daily experience tells you the same. How many men have been reduced to beggary in consequence of lewdness!

III. Of bodily beauty, health and strength. How often are young men conspicuous for their beauty, brought to deformity

in consequence of being addicted to this vice? "A diligent woman is a crown to her husband, and she that doeth things worthy of confusion, is as rottenness in his bones." Prov. xii, 4.

IV. Of rest and content. "The unclean spirit * * walketh through places without water, seeking rest and not finding." Lk. xi, 24. This is a figure of the fate of a lewd man. He is a slave of his passion, filled with fear lest his infamous deeds should come to light, terrified by the account he has one day to give. "The impure man is tormented more by his love for lust, than a Christian martyr by shedding his blood," says St. Augustine.

PART II.

IMPURITY BEREAVES US OF SPIRITUAL GOODS.

I. Of sanctifying grace. Impurity is

1. A mortal sin. As lust of the flesh it is diametrically opposed to God the purest spirit, wherefore it is that it is most hated by him. "Because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief." Eph. v, 6. Call to mind the deluge, the destruction of Sodom, etc.

2. The mother of many other mortal sins. It is a world of iniquity, concealing in its bosom hatred, envy, fraud, drunkenness, murder, etc.

II. Of actual grace.

1. God deprives the unclean person of his graces, because by his attachment to this vice he renders himself unworthy of them. And if God would give him these graces, of what avail?

2. He that is libidinous rejects them, does not correspond with them. His understanding is blinded, his heart hardened, and thus he considers the impediments to his conversion insurmountable. "His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust." Job xx, 11. "No man is more resolved to remain in sin than the libidinous." St. Thomas of Villanova.

III. Of heaven. Lewdness being a grievous sin excludes man from heaven. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor adulterers shall possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 9.

Peroration: Such a monster is lewdness. "Let us walk honestly as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities." Rom. xiii, 13. "The lust is momentary, the torment everlasting." St. Chrysostom.

Bretonneau.

Feast of the Annunciation.

II.

MARY OUR MODEL OF PURITY.

“Ye children, hear me: Blessed are they that keep my ways.” Prov. viii, 32. The great king Alexander appeared, after conquering Persia, in the costume of the Persians, whereby he conquered the hearts of those on whose land he had set the foot of the victor. If you were to ask of me, “Father, what can I best do to honor the Blessed Virgin?” I should say without hesitation: Though it is good to visit churches in honor of Mary, or to say the rosary, etc., yet truer homage is done to her by appearing clad in the virtue of purity. For, purity is the adornment esteemed by Mary above all other virtues, as I am to prove in the first part of this sermon. But who can appear in the purity of the Blessed Virgin? All are able, and obliged to appear in this virtue, as I am to show you in the second part.

PART I.

PURITY IS OF ALL VIRTUES ESTEEMED THE MOST BY THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

1. The first reason wherefore Mary loves purity more than any other virtue, is, because through this virtue, pre-eminently, she was found worthy of being chosen Mother of God. She was the first who ever knew the great value of this virtue, and obliged herself by a vow to keep this angelic garment undefiled. “She was the first to profess virginity,” says St. Bernard. Therefore she was found worthy of acquiring the dignity of spouse and mother of God. When Henry IV, King of France, was to choose a wife among the fair daughters of the European kings and princes whose pictures he held in his hands, he chose Mary of Medicis, because he observed a conspicuous whiteness in her face. Our divine Saviour decided from the beginning to choose, out of all the daughters of Adam, a tender virgin to be his mother. Because he found in Mary a purity more splendid

than that of the angels, he chose his mother, saying: "One is my dove; my perfect one is but one; she is the only one of her mother, the chosen of her that bore her." Cant. vi, 8.

2. If you wish to know why the Blessed Virgin has esteemed so highly the virtue of purity, I answer: because it is in itself an exceedingly precious virtue. For a virtue is the more precious, the stronger the passion is by subduing which this virtue is acquired. The passion, the perfect dominion over which constitutes the virtue of purity, is the most vehement in man; so much so, that the victory over the flesh elevates the human being to the ranks of the angels, who know of no temptations of the flesh. Mary, although never tempted by the flesh, knew better than any created intellect the value of this virtue, and therefore held it in the highest estimation. How great this estimation was you may infer from the words of the Gospel.

Can any one of you tell me why, when giving her consent to the divine espousals, the Blessed Virgin did not simply say: "Be it done to me," which would have been sufficient, but added, "according to thy word?" Hear the explanation. When Mary had heard the salutation from the Angel's mouth, she was troubled at the high praise of herself; she gave, however, no answer. But when she heard from the heavenly messenger that the dignity of the mother of God was offered to her, O then, says St. Bernard, she could keep her humble silence no longer; she wanted to know at once how this should come to pass, because she had resolved to preserve her virginity. Since by the promise of a son her virginity was apparently in danger, she could not refrain from replying: How shall this be done, because I know not man? At last when she heard that this great work would be performed by the power of the Most High, she gave her consent that it should be done to her in the way he had said: "according to thy word." From this conversation which took place between the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Angel, eminent divines draw the conclusion that Mary would have rather resigned the dignity of mother of God, than her virginity. We may then apply to her the words in the Book of Wisdom:

"And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her." Wisd. vii, 8. Well might she esteem virginity so highly, since the Holy Ghost says: "No price is worthy of a continent soul. Eccles. xxvi, 20.

4. Who can now doubt that the imitation of her purity is the surest means of acquiring the affection and protection of the great Virgin? True, it is a delight to her to see you strive to follow her example in her other virtues also. But as she is the first of the human family who appreciated the value of virginity, she loves you the best, when you appear before her in this undefiled and unspotted garment of super-human purity. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Tobias call on us to follow them in many virtues; but as for virginity, Mary is the first to invite our imitation. "She herself," says her admirer St. John Damascene, "is a virgin, and loves the virgins; she is pure, and loves those who are pure. If we, therefore, guard purity of body and soul, we shall obtain her grace."

PART II.

WE ALL ARE OBLIGED TO IMITATE THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The Blessed Virgin is a model of purity to unmarried and to married persons. "The life of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a mirror not only of virginity, but of every form of chastity." St. Ildephonse.

1. First I call on you, ye virgins, to turn your mind to the bright example of modesty set before you by Mary in the years of her tender age. She never showed any extravagance in dress, but appeared in neat, but not exquisite, raiment. Although possessed of the rarest beauty, she avoided being seen, etc. How is your conduct in comparison with hers? I fear that many of you kill your precious time, and disgrace their privileged age, with vain cares for luxury in dress; that many seek with avidity those occasions where their virtue is in extreme peril. Oh! Blessed Virgin, with what feelings must thy heart

be filled, when thou seest at the foot of thine altars virgins of this description? Wilt thou listen to their petitions? Wilt thou receive them as your beloved daughters, because they invoke thee as their sweet mother?

And of those young men, who, in their eyes, on their lips, in their gestures, carry their shamelessness through the streets, into private houses, and the Houses of God; who, full of impure thoughts and unchaste inclinations as they are, spend the Sundays and holidays in love affairs, and in dangerous society, what dost thou say of them, O magnificent queen of heaven? Dost thou find any delight in their calling thee by the sweet name "mother?" The Roman Emperor Carus, being informed of the scandalous life of his son Carinus, whom he had appointed governor of Gaul, cried out: "He is not my son, he is not, because his actions prove him to be my enemy. He shall call me 'father' no longer; 'judge' he shall call me." In a similar way the Blessed Virgin says: These boys, those girls, who call me their mother, are not my children. Their vanity, immodesty, secret and public shamelessness, prove them to be my enemies. I abhor their calling me "mother."

If you have any affection for the Blessed Virgin, and desire the affection of her maternal heart, and her protection, esteem highly purity. Regard your models: St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Francis, St. Brigitta, and St. Euphemia, who underwent the most exquisite tortures in order to guard their chastity. Remember so many of your friends and acquaintances, who, to protect their virtue against the many perils in the world, sought refuge under the roofs of cloisters and convents. They are the chosen children of the great mother, the Virgin, because they were, so to say, born through her example.

2. Ye married people, you should also take an example from the Blessed Virgin by fostering the virtue of purity. First you are obliged to exercise the virtue of chastity, as far as your married state requires it. About this point I will say no more at present. Only let me warn you against the common, wicked, habit found among married people also, of impure

conversation, when they are in society. Can you, in spite of this disgraceful habit, expect to be children of the Virgin, who was troubled at the message of the Archangel, that she should become mother; of the Virgin, who, according to St. Ambrose, had the grace not only of preserving virginity for herself, but also of imparting the virtue of purity to those on whom she turned her eyes. If we cannot expect according to St. Augustine, the protection of the Saints, unless we imitate their virtues, how can we assume that the purest virgin would protect those who violate Christian decency, contrary to the exhortation of the Apostle: "Let your modesty be known to all men?" Philip. iv, 5.

Peroration: Now then! as your veneration for the Blessed Virgin has led you to church, show still more your veneration for her by imitating her purity. "You honor and love Mary in truth by following her in the sincerity of your heart." And you will experience help in all your necessities. St. Bernard asserting: "She is near those who invoke her, principally those whom she finds to resemble her in chastity."

J. B. Campadelli.

III.

THE PICTURES OF THE ANNUNCIATION.

"And the Angel being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace." Lk. i, 28. This day is one of the great festivities which the Church has instituted to do homage to the Mother of God. This day is kept in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and imparts to us great joy. For, on this day, the greatest grace and happiness were showered down on Mary and on all mankind. I may, no doubt, reckon on your assent, if I speak to you on this grand event—the greatest ever known throughout all the ages—after the manner in which it is commonly represented to our eyes by the well known pictures of the Annunciation, We behold in these pictures the Blessed Virgin absorbed in prayer; we behold

before her in humble attitude the Holy Archangel Gabriel; above we behold the Holy Ghost pouring out rays of light. This picture is at once consoling and instructive.

PART I.

The aspect of the picture of the Annunciation affords us the sweetest consolation. For it reminds us of three great joys resulting from our faith. These are :

1. The good tidings of infinite blessings.

The Angel standing before Mary is the privileged messenger. Hear his words : "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son ; and thou shalt call his name Jesus." Lk. i, 31. What a blessed message !

a. Jesus is our *peace*. "Christ is our peace." Eph. ii, 14. "And coming; he preached peace to you, who were afar off, and peace to them who were near at hand." v, 17. His name "the Prince of Peace." Isai. ix, 6. Jesus himself says : "Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give to you." John xiv, 27. Our peace is dependent on our Saviour. He alone is powerful enough to put an end to discord with God, with the world, and our own heart, and to make the sun of peace rise above our heads.

b. Jesus is our *salvation*. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." John xii, 47. "A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance : that Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners." I Tim. i, 15. The Saviour alone is able to cancel the debt of the world, and to merit for us the inheritance of heaven.

These are good tidings indeed, and full of blessings.

2. The most admirable work of divine charity. This is intimated by the Holy Ghost soaring over the head of the Blessed Virgin, and pouring out his rays into her heart. "The Holy Ghost will come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." Lk. i, 35. This most admirable work of divine charity is the Incarnation of the Son of God. The infinite God descends into the womb of the Virgin, to commence a human life for thirty-three years. Could charity go further? By the Incarnation, the word of St. John, "God is charity," is

indeed verified. Could there be anything so consoling as this infinite and perpetual charity of God, especially for the sinner?

3. The most wonderful elevation of the creature.

We see it in Mary. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High." Lk. i, 31. By being chosen the Mother of God, she entered into the most intimate relation with the Triune God; and him whom the heavens call their king, she had the right of calling her son. Divine Omnipotence cannot elevate a created being to a higher dignity. What greater and higher has ever been found among creatures, or what could ever be found, than that of Mary? She excels heaven and earth by true greatness. St. Chrysostom. This exaltation of the Virgin is to us the source of sweetest consolation, because all mankind are honored and blessed by it. Honored, because the Son of God took our flesh; blessed, because Mary has become the mediatrix of all graces.

PART II.

I desire to-day not only to console your hearts, but I desire more still to admonish you to practice the virtues of a Christian life. Therefore I call your attention again to the pictures of the Annunciation. They are very instructive.

1. Behold the Holy Ghost.

God is exceedingly anxious for our salvation. For our sake comes the Holy Ghost upon the Virgin, and by an infinitely profound and adorable mystery effects the Incarnation of the Son of God. Oh! that we might be as anxious for our own salvation! "God who has created us without ourselves, will not save us without ourselves." St. Augustine. If the Holy Ghost moves the heaven of heavens for the salvation of our souls, can there be a more important and more beautiful occupation than the care of our salvation? Oh! take care then of your soul, take more solicitous care of her, than of your earthly possessions, more than of your health and good reputation. "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mt. xvi, 26.

2. Behold the Archangel.

How submissive are the princes of heaven! "Gabriel was sent from God," and forthwith he soars down into the quiet town of Galilee, called Nazareth. Thus the greatest spirits carry out with joy the commissions of the Most High. Oh! that we would learn to obey! "Nothing is more agreeable to God, than forsaking your own will for his sake." St. Thomas Aquinas. But alas! when God commands what there is to be done, man speaks with bold insolence: "I will not serve." Isai. ii, 20. When God commands: "Keep holy the days of my homage; keep far away from impurity, from enmity and all injustice," man says insolently with Pharaoh: "Who is the Lord, that I should hear his voice?" Ex. v, 2.

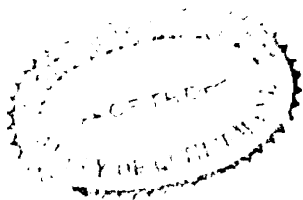
3. Behold the Blessed Virgin.

Behold, how her conversation in God and with God is manifested.

a, By her external appearance: Her hands raised up in prayer. Prayer was the most cherished occupation of the Blessed Virgin. The Angel, when announcing her being chosen, found her praying. Oh! let us learn from the Blessed Virgin how to pray! Her eyes were cast down. This is Christian modesty, which demands that we keep the custody of our eyes.

b. By the words she uttered: "How shall this be done, because I know not man!" Lk. i, 34. These words are expressive of her virginal vow, and her determination to keep it. How dissimilar is our conduct! "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." v, 38. A profound humility speaks out of the mouth of this exalted Virgin. Let us follow her splendid example!

Joseph Schuen.



Fourth Sunday of Lent.

III.

GRACES BY HOLY COMMUNION.

“This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if anyone eat of it, he may not die.” John vi, 50. Who sees not in the gospel of to-day a figure of Holy Eucharist? Thousands and thousands travel the road of life their course being directed to the land of eternity. Jesus the Saviour being in the midst of them, gives them the miraculous bread of heaven, that they may not faint. He nourishes them with his own body and blood, that if any one eat of it, he may not die. And as the present time of the Ecclesiastical year demands of you to receive this most blessed sacrament, and I desire to prepare you for this great day, I will endeavor to show you what are the graces Holy Communion imparts to our souls.

I. HOLY COMMUNION UNITES US MOST INTIMATELY WITH JESUS CHRIST.

For this end Jesus has hidden his divinity and humanity under the species of bread and wine, so as to enter our roof under the form of our nourishment, and so as to unite himself most intimately with us. As every food we eat is changed into our substance, into our flesh and blood; as we, so to say, become, and are, what is our nourishment and food, so is he who receives Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament most intimately united with him. “Thou wilt receive me,” a mysterious voice said to St. Augustine, “yet thou wilt not change me into thee, but thou wilt be changed into me.” Conf. vii, 10. Not merely by an external union, as in the tabernacle, does the Lord dwell in us; not merely spiritually is he united with us, as two friends are united; he dwells in our food and nourishment, and is united with us in the most intimate and real manner. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.” John vi, 57. “He that eateth me, the same also shall

live by me." v. 58. "And I live, now not I," says St. Paul, being filled with the grace of this holy communion; but "Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20. As our Lord took human nature to unite God and man, so his body in Holy Eucharist unites him with every Christian soul.

What created tongue is able to describe how great is this grace of Holy Communion? Are we not on earth to render ourselves worthy of eternal happiness? And this happiness, does it consist in anything else but in everlasting communion with God? The Holy Eucharist is then the commencement of our felicity in God, and our churches are the vestibules of heaven. Heaven and eternal happiness are a perpetual communion, of which you cannot participate, unless it be commenced on earth by the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. "This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if any one eat of it, he may not die." John vi, 50.

II. HOLY COMMUNION SANCTIFIES THE SOUL.

The Lord descending into our hearts is a living and holy God, who destroys all those sins of daily occurrence, which we call venial sins, because they are caused, not by the malignity of our will, but by the frailty of our heart. Holy Communion does like fire produce marvellous effects in a devout soul. St. Thomas Aquinas says appropriately: "If fire, through being a noble element, changes into itself all things with which it comes into contact, first, however, consuming whatever they contain that is repugnant to itself, and then imparts to them its own shape and perfection, how much more will the abyss of the infinite bounty and perfection of Jesus destroy whatever evil is found in our soul, and make her resemble himself?" St. Cyril likens the union between Jesus Christ and a communicating soul to the union effected by mixing melted wax, and its effects he compares to the effects produced by leaven.

Holy Communion protects us also from relapsing into mortal sin. What temptation can be so vehement, as not to be able to be subdued by Jesus in our heart? "If God be for us,

who is against us?" Rom. viii, 31. Can pride still dwell in a heart into which the King of heaven and earth has entered in profound humility? If the Holy of Holies has sanctified our soul and body, must not the unclean spirit flee far from us? The fire of divine charity burning in our hearts, can it fail of igniting our souls also? "As lions breathing fire," says St. Chrysostom, "a terror to the evil spirit, we shall return from this banquet."

III. HOLY COMMUNION STRENGTHENS OUR SOULS.

When Elias the prophet, fleeing from his enemies, fatigued unto death, slept in the shadow of a juniper tree in the desert, "an angel of the Lord touched him and said to him: Arise and eat. He looked, and behold, there was at his head a hearth-cake, and a vessel of water; and he ate and drank, and he fell asleep again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said to him: Arise, eat; for thou hast yet a great way to go. And he arose, and ate, and drank; and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God, Horeb." III Kings, xix, 5-8. We all have to make a long journey through the desert of this earthly life unto the mount of God, unto the holy city of the Lord. Our Church therefore regards this mysterious, strengthening food as a figure of the Holy Eucharist, of which we must participate, that we faint not on the way.

1. Who is able to describe the wonderful strength imparted to our souls by Holy Communion? The woman of the Gospel touched the hem of the Saviour's garment, and was healed. In the Blessed Sacrament we touch, not merely the hem of his garment, but receive in our body and soul the plenitude of his divinity. When the Lord dwelt visibly on earth, who approached him without perceiving his grace? St. John witnessed this divine influence, when both he and the Lamb of God were yet in their mothers' womb. Wherever the Lord went, vestiges of grace marked his footprints. "He went about doing good." The Lord leaves the same vestige of his grace in the soul of him who has received him in Holy Communion. Have you not

yourselves experienced strength and grace coming forth from this Communion-table and this tabernacle?

2. How great is the strength acquired by our souls from prayer! How much more shall we obtain from the real union in the Blessed Sacrament than from a spiritual union by prayer? Abundant will be the grace, when the Lord Himself dwells in us, and prays incessantly to his father who is in heaven! Therefore all pious souls have sought and found strength in this perennial source of grace. What has given to little children, tender virgins, and tottering men of old age, superhuman strength to patiently endure the most exquisite torments? It was the bread of life carried to them into their dungeons. What enables those who devote their lives to the nursing of the sick and the instruction of the ignorant, or those who devote themselves to the ministry of the altar, to persevere in their arduous calling? It is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament who cries out to them: Have confidence; "I have overcome the world." John xvi, 33. What strengthens our youth against sensuality and the world? What consoles the poor and distressed? Holy Communion.

IV. HOLY COMMUNION IS TO US A PLEDGE OF EVERLASTING HAPPINESS.

1. As viaticum, the Blessed Sacrament is to the sick the object of ardent desire. Their Saviour is to them strength in their agony, and the salvation of their souls. The viaticum increases divine grace, the supernatural life of the soul, and leads her to everlasting communion with him whom she received in faith.

2. It is to the dying the greatest consolation, being a pledge of their future resurrection. For how can the body, nourished with the body and blood of our Saviour, remain and perish in corruption? If the fruit of the forbidden tree caused death, the fruit of this tree of life heals the wound of death. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." John vi, 52. "This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if any one eat of it, he may not die." v. 50.

Peroration: After having explained to you the gracious effects of Holy Communion, it seems to me that I have said so little that I might exclaim with Holy Scripture: "Who is able to declare his works? For who shall search out his glorious acts? And who shall show forth the power of his majesty? Or who shall be able to declare his mercy? Nothing may be taken away, nor added; neither is it possible to find out the glorious works of God. When a man hath done, then shall he begin; and when he leaveth off, he shall be at a loss." Eccles. xviii, 2-6. If you cannot comprehend God, you cannot comprehend the nature and effects of this miraculous bread. Make an earnest preparation whenever you approach Jesus by Holy Communion, and then you will feel, more clearly than human tongue can express, how sweet and gracious is the Lord, and "how great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee." Ps. xxx, 20.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

MANNER OF SANCTIFYING OUR EXERTIONS FOR DAILY BREAD.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Lk. xii, 31. These words of the Lord were fulfilled to-day in a miraculous manner. The multitude desirous of salvation had preferred the kingdom of God to all things, wherefore Jesus gave them their earthly bread in addition, accompanying his gifts with abundant blessing. The Lord gives us continually our daily bread, multiplying for this, the grain in the field; and yet are we contented with it? The reason thereof is, because we are inclined to make our daily pursuits for a livelihood the main point, and the kingdom of God a secondary one. Perhaps we go so far, even, as to separate one from the other, although religion, like the leaven, should penetrate all our works and bring God's blessing upon all we do. This blessing will be given to us, if we endeavor to sanc-

tify our solicitude for our daily-bread, by performing our employments,

I. IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD,

1. It is God's will that I work. By this truth we should be induced

a. To consider and esteem labor as a sacred duty. Only he that works corresponds with his destiny, and may be content with himself. Adam had to work before his lamentable fall. "And the Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it and to keep it." Gen. ii, 15. "Much more is man obliged to work after he has sinned. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Gen. iii, 19. Man is born to labor and the bird to fly." Job v, 7.

b. To avoid idleness, which is not only sinful in itself, but also the source of sin and poverty. "When we werẽ with you, we declared this to you, that if any man will not work, neither let him eat. For we have heard that there are some among you who walk disorderly, working not at all, but curiously meddling. Now we charge them that are such, and beseech them by the Lord Jesus Christ, that, working with silence, they would eat their own bread." II Thess. iii, 10-12.

2. I work for God's honor. This truth renders labor

a. Consoling, though labor is sometimes hard, and sweat and sorrow are our share. If love towards your friend can render labor sweet, what strength will there be in lifting up your eyes to God? Call to mind the contrast between an infidel workman, whose labor is accompanied by cursing, and the pious laborer who works for God, who cheerfully works, because God has ordained it so. Which of the two is the happier?

b. Meritorious. He who works in view of his wages only, has received his reward. But he who sanctifies his work by prayer, is surrounded by holy angels, to carry his toil and good intentions before the throne of God. "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer to the Lord." Tobias xii, 12.

II. IN THE SPIRIT OF PENANCE.

I must work because I am a sinner.

1. This reflection will reconcile you to your work. As the heart is wounded by undeserved punishment, so a generous mind finds satisfaction in a consciousness of justice being done.

a. Look upon Adam. Having heard from God's mouth himself that labor was imposed as a penance for sin, it became to him, not so much a misfortune, as a means of making atonement to offended justice, and of recovering, by divine grace, the lost paradise. Could he, under this view, abhor labor?

b. Look upon every man. Each state of life has its proper tribulations and hardships. Who then will be content, he that carries his heavy burden without reference to heaven, or he that thinks: I am born for penance; I work and suffer, because I am a sinner, and that I may become agreeable to God at least as a penitent.

2. It ennobles man, imparting to him

a. Deep humility. For he becomes familiar with the idea of being punished as a sinner; and thus learns to be humble; in consequence of which virtue he becomes worthy of the greatest graces, reserved only to those who are humble of heart.

b. True wisdom: nobody but he that labors in a spirit of penance has learned to draw temporal and eternal advantage from unavoidable evils.

III. IN ORDER TO FULFILL A DUTY TOWARDS OTHERS.

Only he that has lost all sense of duty can refuse to work. For labor is a duty

1. Of justice. The Apostle beseeches those idlers, by the name of Jesus, that they, by working, should eat their own bread. II Thess. iii, 12. Therefore, God's wrath is challenged

a. By idlers. They do not fulfill the condition, under which God allows man to eat: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." The idler eats bread earned by others, *i. e.*, the bread of injustice.

b. Bysquanderers who, as they wantonly deprive themselves of the means of eating their own bread, and through their own fault appease their stomach at the expenses of others, eat the bread of injustice also.

2. Of both justice and charity. You are strictly obliged to earn your bread

a. For your family. Even the birds of the air who feed their young ones, preach this doctrine. Should we, who are shamed by the very brutes, yet dare to assume the name of Christians? "If any man not have care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8.

b. For the poor. Faith teaches us to consider all our fellow-men members of one large family. "You are a robber whenever you do not relieve the poor, provided it is in your power." St. Basil.

Peroration: It is in vain that our age, feeble as it is in faith, makes so many efforts to banish discontent from among the laborers. Try to sanctify your daily exertions for bread, and the problem is solved, which no politics can solve.

Bishop Galura.

Passion Sunday.

III.

THE TRIBUNAL OF PENANCE.

Jesus alone could say to his enemies: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" We, all of us, are sinners. If God would take vengeance for our sins, or forgive them only once, who could be saved? Thanks be to him for his readiness to forgive our trespasses even seventy times seven times, in the Holy Sacrament of Penance, which, as the "second saving plank," is to save the sinner from shipwreck (Trid. xiv), and in which, through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the stains of our sins are washed away. If ever, it is becoming in the season of Lent to give you a complete instruction on this holy sacrament. For this end let us represent it to our mind as a tribunal, which it is indeed.

PART I.

IT IS THE MOST VENERABLE TRIBUNAL.

Remitting sins is an exclusive prerogative of God, and in the tribunal of penance God alone exercises primary jurisdiction. It is God alone who has imposed on Christians the duty of confessing their sins. Consequently this tribunal has

A. Divine Authority.

1. The confession of sins is a duty prescribed by God himself, as is inferred:

a. From the words of institution: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you shall retain, they are retained." John xx, 22. If men are to judge, and of course to judge with justice, what sins they shall forgive, and what they shall retain, they must needs come to the knowledge of them through confession.

b. From the practice of all Christian people in every age, who would never have accepted so arduous an obligation, unless it had been of strict obligation from the beginning, and consequently commanded by God himself.

c. From the writings of the earliest Fathers.

Tertullian calls sin a weight weighing on our conscience, of which we cannot ease ourselves, except by confession. St. Cyprian testifies that the Christians, whenever they were so unhappy as to fall into sin, would open their hearts with the greatest simplicity and reveal their most secret recesses. Origen calls sin a poison, which you cannot get rid of except by vomiting, *i. e.*, confessing.

2. It is a regulation worthy of divine wisdom :

For confession is just : or does the malignity of mortal sin deserve less humiliation ? It is wholesome as a restraint of bad inclinations and passions. It is a work of the greatest mercy, since contrite confession can blot out the greatest guilt.

B. This tribunal makes important demands, which you ought to comply with. These demands are :

1. *Sincere confession*, consequently

a. No careless, no lukewarm, confession. A life spent in sin for months or years demands an accurate examination of conscience.

b. No ambiguous confession. Many fear both to reveal, and to conceal, their sins, particularly habitual sins.

c. Neither must it be arrogant, full of pride, charging others with your guilt ; nor childish, full of empty talk.

Say in all humility : " I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord." Ps. xxxi, 5.

2. *Sincere contrition*. Detest your sin as the only evil, from supernatural motives, especially from love of God. Detest *all* your sins, and be willing to make the most arduous sacrifice, if necessary, for amendment. Make a firm and practical resolution.

Remember that contrition is the most necessary condition of obtaining forgiveness of sins, so much so that it cannot be replaced by anything else, the case of extreme necessity not excepted.

PART II.

THE MOST GRACIOUS TRIBUNAL.

Let me call your attention to three considerations by which the mercy of God is manifested :

1. You confess your sins to one of your fellow-men who is bound by perpetual silence.

a. By divine and ecclesiastical laws under the greatest temporal and eternal punishment, the tongue of the Confessor is tied, so that one may apply to the priests the words of Holy Scripture: "They have mouths, and speak not, they have eyes, and see not. They have ears, and hear not." Ps. cxviii, 5.

b. Divine Providence itself guards the secrecy of confession, so that no nervous disease or mental debility, was ever the cause of revealing secrets of the confessional. Even apostates never violated the sacramental seal.

2. Your honor is preserved, although you confess what is dishonoring. For, sin and crime dishonor man; to confess them with sorrow in your heart, is honorable. You confess your sins to a fellow-man, who himself is subject to human frailty and sin. This confession is not connected with humiliating formalities, as is the case before human tribunals. Indeed, you tell your Confessor nothing that is new to him. What has happened to you, happened to David, Solomon, Peter, and to many others. Some one who had confessed his sins to St. Francis de Sales, said to the Saint: "What must you think of me, now that you know all my ignominies." The Saint answered without hesitation: "What! do you place me in the number of those Pharisees who regarded Mary Magdalen, after she had obtained forgiveness of her sins, as still the sinner she once had been? Far from it! I regard you as a chosen vessel of grace."

3. You receive forgiveness of your sins and other graces. This effect of the sacrament of penance is

a. Unfailing. It is a doctrine of faith, that sacramental absolution justifies the penitent sinner immediately and irrevocably. "It is quite as certain that, after a worthy confession, sin is remitted, as it is certain that God cannot become unfaithful to his word." St. Isidore.

b. Abundant: Every sin without exception can be released. The Church has condemned the doctrine of Novatus who attempted to exclude certain sins from forgiveness.

c. Instantaneous. For no sooner has the priest, after your sorrowful confession, pronounced the words: "I absolve thee of thy sins," than your slave-chains fall to the ground, as the walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of the trumpets. Hasten then to partake of these sacramental blessings.

1. Defer your confession no longer, delay being

a. An offence against God. You know that you are in the state of condemnation, and are careless in obtaining his grace through a means both easy and unailing.

b. Cruelty toward your own soul. You would not suffer a *bodily* evil to prevail on you, if you could prevent it.

c. Very dangerous; as death may approach you at any hour; and on the death bed true repentance, although possible, is exceedingly difficult.

2. How sweet, on the other hand, are the fruits of a worthy confession!

a. Peace, poured out by the Holy Ghost into the heart of the sinner. The condition of the sinner is not unlike the condition of a woman when she is in labor; first anguish, then joy.

b. Wholesome filial fear.

c. Protection against the impulses of our passions, and the enticement of bad example. The exhortation and the advice of the priest, the grace of the sacrament, our firm resolution, are powerful means in resisting all temptations.

Peroration: Hasten then to this sacred tribunal, and admiring the depth of divine mercy, learn to love and praise your God. "Praise the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." Ps. cxxxv, 1. "The Lord is sweet to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." Ps. cxliv, 9.

Perrin.

IV.

TRUE AND FALSE VIRTUE.

The Gospel of this day represents to our spiritual eyes Jesus disputing with the Pharisees. What a contrast between him and

them ! How brilliant are the rays of his virtue in distinction from their hideous hypocrisy ! You see in Jesus true virtue for imitation; in the Pharisees, false virtue for avoidance.

PART I.

CHARACTER OF TRUE VIRTUE IN THE BEHAVIOR OF JESUS.

I. True virtue is blameless :

1. In its principles. The principle on which Jesus founded all his actions, was to fulfill perfectly the will of God in all things.

a. He did all that God willed. "My food is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work." John iv, 34. Being obedient to him he preached, suffered and died.

b. In the manner in which God willed. He was "the splendor of his glory, and the figure of his substance." Heb. i, 3. "What things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner." John v, 19.

c. Because God willed : for his glory and the salvation of men. "I seek not my own glory." John viii, 50. "I have glorified thee upon the earth : I have finished the work upon earth which thou gavest me to do." John xvii, 4. "Of them whom thou hast given me, I have not lost anyone." John xviii, 9. These principles should be the motives of our doings ; without them there is no true virtue.

2. In its doctrines. Jesus preached at his Father's command. "I have not spoken of myself ; but the Father who sent me, he gave me command what I should say, and what I should speak." John xii, 49. True virtue submits to the authority of the Holy Church, the pillar and foundation-stone of truth. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you." I Cor. i, 10.

II. True virtue is charitable.

1. How kindly Jesus behaved ! Though the Pharisees insulted and blasphemed him, he promised them life everlasting, if they would believe in him and keep his word.

2. Such is the character of true virtue. It must be kind

and charitable. Charity is the soul of all virtues. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of the angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling symbol." I Cor. xiii, 1. Virtue "overcomes evil by good." Rom. xii, 21.

III. True virtue is patient.

1. How patient was Jesus! The Jews call him a Samaritan, say that he has a devil, but he remains patient.

2. Patience is inseparable from love, hence from virtue in general. "Patience is necessary for you; that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. x, 36. "We glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial, and trial hope: and hope confoundeth not." Rom. v, 3-5. Patience is needed for every virtue.

PART II.

CHARACTER OF FALSE VIRTUE IN THE ACTIONS OF THE PHARISEES.

I. False virtue is erroneous:

1. In its principles. How erroneous were the principles of the Pharisees! God had forbidden the Jews to hold communication with Gentiles and heretics. Now the Pharisees went so far as to hate them, under the impression that they were doing a service to God.

Such is false virtue! Hypocrites either have no knowledge of true principles, or make a false application of them, confounding indifferent matters with fundamentals.

2. In their doctrines. The teachings of the Pharisees were full of contradictions. What a contrast between what their mouth uttered, and what they showed forth in their deeds! How they distorted the words of Jesus or passages of Scripture!

It is thus that false virtue acts. The sectarians of all centuries had recourse to falsehood, and distorted God's word, simulating zeal for truth and piety.

3. In their behavior. How scandalous was the life of the Pharisees! To deceive the people, they used to fast, and pray in public, secretly committing the most atrocious crimes. "Un-

less your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. v, 20. It is by false appearances that hypocrites try to conceal from the eyes of men that they are slaves of the basest passions. Of what avail to them are even good works? "When you fast, be not, as the hypocrites, sad: for they disfigure their faces, that to men they may appear fasting. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." Mt. vi, 16.

II. False virtue is uncharitable. The present Gospel bears witness how uncharitable the Pharisees were to Jesus; which was not the effect of momentary excitement, but of mature reflection. For to them the first commandment ran thus: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy." Mt. v, 43.

Such is the character of false virtue. It pretends to love God, and hates man, *i. e.*, God in his image and likeness. Every contradiction, the smallest offence excites their wrath and vengeance.

III. False virtue is intolerant. It manifests itself

1. As a spirit of persecution. Jesus was persecuted by the Pharisees. Good Christians are persecuted by the hypocrites of our days.

2. As reviling. How dreadful was the reviling of the Pharisees against Jesus! Hypocrites of all ages are the only just persons in their own eyes. All the rest of men are sinners, adulterers, etc.

3. As delighting in cruelty. The Pharisees took up stones to cast at him. The Apostles and disciples of Jesus experienced the same treatment at their hands; their successors meet with the same lot in our days.

Peroration: Investigate therefore whether the signs of true or false virtue are visible in you. If you should find that any of your virtue is of the false kind, try to turn it into true virtue, so as to be able to say to the devils on the day of judgment: "Which of you can convince me of sin?"

Menne.

Palm Sunday.

III.

THE JEWISH AND THE CHRISTIAN PASCHAL LAMB.

“Christ, our pasch, is sanctified.” I Cor. v, 7. This present week was to the Jews the preparatory week for their Paschal festivity. It should be to us a preparation for our Pasch also. And as the Jews prepared their houses, and themselves especially, for the eating of the Paschal Lamb, in which ceremony the grand feast of the Jews culminated; so we should prepare ourselves in this holy week for the eating of the true Paschal Lamb, for our Easter Communion. And as the Paschal Lamb of the Jews was a picture of our Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ; so should the manner in which the Jews were commanded to eat their Paschal Lamb, be a lesson to us of the manner in which we should make our Easter Communion.

PART I.

On the eve of Pasch, when the family was assembled, the father of the family dipped a bunch of hyssop in the blood of the Paschal Lamb, and sprinkled the transom of the door therewith, and both the door cheeks. After this the lamb was put on the table; the father said the blessing, and the solemn supper commenced. Exod. xii.

What must have been the feelings of the children of Israel, when they were performing this time-honored ceremony? They were no doubt filled with reverence and gratitude towards him who “passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, striking the Egyptians, and saving our houses” (xii, 27); towards him who had the same night led their fathers out of the land of the Egyptians who had “made their life bitter with hard works in clay, and brick, and with all manner of service, wherewith they were overcharged in the works of the earth.” Exod. i, 14.

We ought to entertain similar feelings to those of the children of Israel, since Christ is the true Paschal Lamb, and Israel's delivery out of Egypt is but a shadow of our delivery from the servitude of the devil.

Christ is the true Paschal Lamb. He was foretold by the prophets as the Lamb who was to bear our sins. "He was offered, because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth: he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth." Isai. liii, 7. When St. John saw Jesus coming, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who taketh away the sin of the world." John i, 29. In the Apocalypse (v, 12) the Saviour is called the Lamb that was slain, being worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and benediction. By his propitiating death we have been redeemed. For "you were not redeemed with corruptible gold or silver from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb unspotted and undefiled." I Pet. i, 18, 19.

When we, therefore, on any of these days, approach the altar to eat our Paschal Lamb, let us call to our mind that with his blood we were delivered from eternal death and the servitude of the devil, thus complying with the admonition of St. Paul: "As often as you shall eat this bread, or drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come." I Cor. xi, 26. Whilst millions perish on the high-way of this life, we are saved through the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The devil loses his power over us. As the eating of the Paschal Lamb was to the Jew a pledge of his delivery from death, so the reception of Holy Communion is to us Christians the pledge of our salvation.

The Jews had to observe certain regulations, which inculcate on us the feeling with which we should approach the Lord's Supper.

a. No stranger, nor any one who had not partaken of the rite of circumcision, was allowed to eat of the Paschal Lamb. No one but the children of the Church can receive the Blessed

Sacrament. Whoever is uncircumcised of heart let him do penance, and confess his sins with a contrite heart, before he dares to receive the Holy of Holies.

b. The Jews were not allowed to eat the Lamb "raw, nor boiled in water, but only roasted on the fire." Ex. xii, 9. Your souls must be inflamed with the fire of the Holy Ghost.

c. The Jews had to eat with the Lamb unleavened bread and lettuce. Let us remember our sins with sorrow and contrition, and let us not feast with the old leaven of sin.

PART II.

Holy Communion is also a pledge of everlasting joys.

The Lord had said to the Jews: "And thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands; and you shall eat in haste: for it is the Phase (that is the Passage) of the Lord." Ex. xii, 11.

1. The Paschal Lamb was to the Jews in Egypt the refreshment for their approaching journey, so that in the strength of this food they crossed with delight the boundaries of Egypt. In after days, it was a memorial of the grand promises concerning the next world, made to Abraham and his seed. Our Christian Paschal Lamb is the foretaste of heavenly joy, consisting in a perpetual communion with God. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath life everlasting; and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi, 55.

2. The Jews ate their Pasch, having their *reins girded*, and shoes on their feet, as if they were on their journey. We are pilgrims and strangers on earth. Whatever surrounds us in this life, even the body which we carry about with us, is the garment of our soul on her journey to the next world. After having deposited all things, we shall enter our heavenly home with a glorified body. Oh! that you might nourish such and similar thoughts on your Communion day!

3. Let us hold the *traveller's staff* in our hands, when we eat the Lamb. The traveller's staff of the Christian is the holy Cross, his support and strength. You eat the flesh which was

offered for us on the Cross, and our thoughts should, according to St. Paul, be directed to the death of our Lord, whenever we eat this bread or drink this chalice.

4. The Lord commanded the Jews: "You shall eat in *haste*, for it is the Passage of the Lord." Approach the Lord's table with a burning desire in your heart. Lukewarmness be far from you!

5. "If the number be less than may suffice to eat the lamb, he shall take unto him his neighbor." Exod. xii, 4. This is an admonition to fraternal charity. "For we being many, are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread." I Cor. x, 17.

Peroration: "If any man is clean, and was not on a journey, and did not make the phase, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Numb. ix, 13. We are also directly bound to make phase. And to make it worthily, let us cleanse our souls by penance.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

MOTIVES OF THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

The Holy Church combines in her liturgy of this day joy and sadness, jubilation and lamentation. First, before High Mass, the solemn procession, and the magnificent Hosanna, and then, during Holy Mass, the recitation of the Sacred Passion with its impetuous Crucifige. There the palm branches, and here the crown of thorns; there the multitude spread their garments in the way, here the King is deprived of his own garments. There he is King of Israel, here he is a mock-king. The Church combines these two contrasts, because they were united in reality also. For the honors, as well as the dishonors, proceeded from the same persons, in the same place, and well nigh at the same time, there being an interval of only a few days. What was the reason for which our Lord and God, who, on every other occasion, de-

clined all public honor, allowed those Hosannas of the multitude, and this solemn entrance into his city? I will give you a short answer to this question.

1. The first motive was, because he wished to show that, having full control over the hearts of men, he was offered this homage, because he himself willed it. Just as easily as he called forth the Hosanna of the children of the Hebrews on this day, he could have called it forth on the next Friday also.

2. He wanted to remind us that he had gained his royal honors by bitter sufferings. Thus the prophecy of the second Psalm was fulfilled, in the first part of which, the kings and princes are represented as combating against the Christ of God; whilst, in the second part, the Psalmist speaks of the fruit of this combat, his elevation on the royal throne. "I am appointed king by him over Sion his holy mountain, preaching his commandment. The Lord hath said to me: Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession." This Holy week our Saviour suffers; but he triumphs also.

3. The third reason is because it was his will to fulfill, in his own person, the typical observance of the Jews of leading the lambs which were to be slaughtered and eaten on the eve of the Great Sabbath, in solemn procession, into the City on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan. The true Paschal Lamb, our Saviour, enters the City in solemn procession also. He proceeds jubilant like a giant to die a few days later a victim for our sins. In a similar triumphant procession, innumerable martyrs marched on to their death, in imitation of our Saviour's example.

4. St. Bernard assigns yet two other reasons, viz.: Jesus meant to intimate, by his own example, that we should not rely on the glory and honors of the world, "all flesh being grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field." Isai. xl, 6. Moreover, this Saint sees, in the triumphant entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, our own future entrance into Celestial Jerusalem

prefigured, when we are to be carried by the clouds to meet our king, Jesus, holding in our hands palms, the emblems of our victory, and when, not in the society of a fickle multitude, but in the society of the heavenly powers and the whole choir of the elect, we are to spread before his feet our garments, that is all which adorns and beautifies our souls, our glory and merits. If thus the triumph of our Saviour points out to us the goal we have to strive for, the Passion succeeding this triumph shows us the way leading there, the royal way of the cross.

Peroration : Let these blessed palms which you take along with you to your houses, and which you are to preserve under your roofs, be a continual memorial of your solemn entrance into heaven. Would they would remind you, at the same time, of the necessity of travelling the royal way of the Cross, which alone leads to the desirable peace in families, without which we cannot hope to partake of the heavenly triumph of our Saviour who entered Jerusalem as the prince of peace!

Bishop C. Martin.

Easter Sunday.

III.

HOW WE SHOULD RISE WITH JESUS CHRIST.

“If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above.” Col. iii, 1. Simeon’s words, “Behold, this child is set for the ruin, and for the resurrection of many in Israel,” have this day been verified. For “many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose; and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many” (Mt. xxvii, 53); whilst the guards “became as dead men,” and the priests were more hardened than ever. Thus Christ is risen for the resurrection of the one, and for the ruin of the other.

The same thing happens in our days, particularly in Paschal time, when, in the Holy Eucharist, Jesus is received by many to their ruin and condemnation, by others to their resurrection and life.

Although I hope that we all are risen with Christ to life everlasting, yet there may be some who deceive themselves. For their sake let us inquire, how we must rise from sin so as to rise with Jesus Christ indeed.

I. WE MUST RISE INDEED.

“The Lord is risen indeed.” Lk. xxiv, 34. Jesus made his resurrection manifest by frequently appearing to his disciples, and even eating with them, and being touched by them. He did not appear in an assumed body, as Samuel appeared at the instigation of Saul. We all *seem* to have risen in this gracious time; but are all risen indeed? Is there no one amongst you who is still buried in the mouldering grave of his sins and vices? To him the words of the Holy Ghost are addressed: “Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead.” Apoc. iii, 1. These dreadful words apply to all those

1. Who, after neglecting their confession for a considerable time approached the judgment seat of penance without

earnestly examining their conscience. They are not risen indeed, and are in the greatest danger of falling into the abyss of eternal ruin, according to the words of the Prophet Jeremias: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully." xlviii, 10.

2. Those who did not repent of their mortal sins at the time of confession, are not risen either, but are still in the grave. God's wrath is not appeased, unless the offender humbles himself before him, feeling sorrow for having offended his Lord and God.

3. Nor are those risen who, when making their confession, made no firm resolution to shun sin and its proximate occasions. "He must be regarded as a scoffer, not as a penitent, who does, or intends to do, the very sin about which he pretends to feel grief and detestation." St. Isidore.

4. Lastly, all those are not risen, but are in great danger of eternal perdition, who, in their confession, intentionally conceal a mortal sin. The reason is, because he who keeps under his roof but one of God's deadly enemies, will remain a child of death and inimical to God, not one sin being remitted unless all are. When Jesus found more than one devil in one man, he expelled them *all* at once. If you are still given to your old vices, you are not risen, although you have the name of being alive. If you derided your God by concealing a mortal sin in the sacrament of penance, you are not only not risen, but a heavier stone is rolled at the door of your sepulchre.

II. WE MUST RISE FOR EVER, NEVER TO DIE AGAIN.

1. Jesus is risen, and dies no more. "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him." Rom. vi, 9. In a similar way, the death of the soul, that is sin, should have no more dominion over him who is truly risen. Lazarus was raised from the dead, and died a second time. Many of the saints of the Old Covenant came out of the tombs, at the resurrection of their Saviour, but they died a second time also. Those who shortly after their Easter

Communion yield to their passions again, are not risen unto the immortal life of grace. As long as the Ark of the Covenant was being carried through the river of Jordan, the waters stood as a wall to the right and to the left. But when it had reached the other bank of the river, the waters returned to their place, and hastened on to the Dead Sea. Many in our midst stop their sinful course in Holy Week, because they carry in their hearts the Ark of the New Covenant, or reflect on the Sacred Passion of their Saviour. A few days later they take up the beaten track again.

2. What does it profit them to be risen from the grave of sin. To them the words of Holy Scripture refer: "The dog swallows again what he has vomited." What did it profit the wife of Lot to have left Sodom, since she looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt? What did it profit the Israelites to have been delivered from Egyptian captivity, since they afterwards offended God, and miserably perished in the desert? What did it profit Pontius Pilate to declare the innocence of Jesus, since afterwards he sentenced him to death? The devil is content with a final victory. Does not Jesus say of him, that after having been expelled out of a house, he returns with seven other spirits, and that the last state of the man who thus invites him shall be worse than the first? Though forgiveness of sins after relapsing is possible, we do not know at all that it will be granted to us.

III.

Jesus is risen with a glorified body, it being impassible, bright, agile and subtile. And as we have borne the image of the earthly Adam, we should bear also the image of the heavenly Adam. I Cor. xv, 49.

1. When we rise from sin, we should be impassible, that is, we should be invincible, never terrified by calumnies and envy, nor puffed up by success in earthly enterprises.

2. We should rise bright, and shining, that our light shine before men, and it be made manifest that we are risen with Christ indeed, and that our fellow-men profit by our good example.

3. We should be agile, that is always ready to perform what our duty and Christian obedience demand; prompt and agile in fulfilling the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church, after the example of those monks who, at the first stroke of the bell calling them to prayer, or other spiritual exercises, would not as much as finish the letter they had commenced, but proceeded at once to the work they were summoned to.

4. We should be subtile as Christ, that is, we should go, as it were, through locked doors to help our neighbor; we should penetrate the heavens by praying and meditating, so as to join spiritually the society of God and his saints, it being the foretaste of our eternal union with them.

Peroration: This hope of joining the Saints in heaven cannot be entertained by us, unless we be risen with Jesus Christ indeed, for ever, and after the manner of his glorified body. Oh! that we all may be risen with Christ in such manner, and that we may never relapse into our former sins, so that we may one day be found worthy of celebrating an everlasting Easter in heaven, and of singing a perpetual Alleluja with all the saints and angels of heaven.

M. Faber.

IV.

SOURCES OF EASTER JOYS.

The Sacred Passion of the Bridegroom is over, and with it the mourning of the Church is over also. She is so much rejoiced over his Resurrection, that she repeats a great many times the words of the Psalmist: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us be glad, and rejoice therein." The causes of mourning of Holy Week being suddenly turned into the jubilation of Easter-day, are, chiefly, as follows:

I. The glory of the humanity of Jesus in his Resurrection, who became the true sun of justice and the light of the world. We rejoice

1. In the fact of Christ's Resurrection; for

a. The soul of Christ, accompanied by holy souls, returns from Limbo into the Sepulchre.

b. There she met the glorious body guarded by holy angels, and adorned with the qualities of glorification.

c. The circumstances of the Resurrection are glorious: earthquake, angels, terror of the guards.

2. In the words of the angel addressed to the women: "Fear not you" (Mt. xxviii, 6), as if to say: You have far more reason to rejoice than to fear and mourn.

3. In the joy of the Church inviting angels and man to be jubilant, and hailing the night which witnessed the resurrection of her bridegroom. Exultet. *O vere beata nox!*

II. The kindness of Jesus Christ who appeared

1. To his Blessed Mother, a fact which, as being necessary and self-evident, Holy Scripture does not mention. It cannot be supposed that the Creator of nature should have neglected the natural duty of consoling her who has conceived him in her womb, and who held his dead body in her arms.

2. To the three devout women who had followed him on the way of the Cross, and shown their affection to his body in the sepulchre.

3. To penitent Peter, who believed and confirmed his brethren, who believed him saying: "The Lord is risen indeed, and appeared to Simon." Lk. xxiv, 24.

4. To the disciples on their way to Emmaus, who, being sorrowful for Jesus' sake, sought elsewhere consolation. It is to them that Jesus appears as solicitous pastor of their souls. The conversation about him afforded to them the opportunity of becoming converted; the conversation with him filled their hearts with burning love. Lk. xxiv, 32.

5. To the forsaken Apostles, the sheep without shepherd. He convinced them of his Resurrection, and gave them different powers. "The disciples were glad, when they say the Lord." John xx, 20. In a similar way Jesus approaches all of us, spreading consolation a. to the innocent, who never forsook him; b. to the truly converted, who seek him with Magdalen; c. to

the sinners who desire to arise from sin with Peter; *d.* to those who have gone astray, and long, on their sinful way, for Jesus; *e.* to the forsaken, whom he never forsakes. Whoever seeks Jesus will find him; but he must partake of his sufferings, as if wanting to rejoice with him. I Pet. iv, 13.

III. The hope of our glorious resurrection.

“The hope of a great reward renders the hardest work agreeable.” St. Bernard. The hope to arise from death like Christ, made Job, the Machabees, and many saints, rejoice in the most painful torments; wherefore this present day is to us exceeding joyful, because it is the figure and pledge of our resurrection. The Resurrection of our body is

1. Possible. As God has created man, so he can recall him to life. In nature God works in a similar way. God, who is able to form from dust so many beautiful flowers, and out of earth, in the bowels of the earth, gold, silver and diamonds, is he unable to recall your body out of the bosom of the earth? St. John Damascene.

2. Just, that the body be also judged, to partake of the fate of the soul, with which it was so intimately united.

3. Real. In the Old Testament it was foreseen by Ezechiel in his celebrated vision. Ezech. xxxvii, 1. In the New Testament scarcely any doctrine is more inculcated than this. Christ is “the first fruits of them that sleep.” I Cor. xv, 20. The firstlings of the fruit are not of a different kind from the other fruit. If we do not rise, Christ is not risen either.

Peroration: Calling to mind the above motives, let us be glad and rejoice to-day over the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; let us be glad over our own Resurrection after a short sleep in the bosom of Mother Earth.

Ch. Braun.

Low Sunday.

III.

REMEMBER THE WOUNDS OF THY SAVIOUR.

"Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side." John xx, 27. Five large wounds were inflicted on our Saviour, four in his sacred hands and feet by means of the cruel nails, and one in his sacred heart by means of the spear. "Woe!" exclaims St. Bernard, "a wild beast has in its fury rent the garment of the Lord, and made five deplorable rents in it." Jesus retained the marks of these wounds on his glorified body. "Put in thy finger hither, and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side." With these wounds he will on the great day of judgment descend down upon earth; and all nations shall see whom Israel has pierced. Let us prevent the judgment of God by frequently gazing, with ardent devotion, upon the wounds of our own Jesus. Thus our souls will be moved with compassion, consoled and encouraged.

I. A remembrance of, and a glance at, the wounds of our Lord move our soul, by eliciting

1. *Tears of compassion.*

a. Even the afflictions of a *stranger* move us with compassion. Were you to behold one of your fellow-men prostrate on the ground, in the depth of his misery; were you to see his pitiful look, his blood coming forth from deep wounds, truly, you would not be able to pass by with indifference.

b Your compassion would be the greater, if the sufferer were dear to your heart; if you recognized in the sufferer your friend, your brother, your father, you would not refrain your tears.

Now behold Jesus! He is wounded, is plunged into the depth of misery. "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the

head, there is no soundness therein : wound and bruises and swelling sores." Is. i, 6. Besides he is very dear to you, being to you more than friend, brother, father. If your heart feels no compassion, it must be hard as stone, dried up as the sand of the desert. A glance at the wounds of Jesus has drawn tears from the eyes of the Saints, tears of compassion for our own poor Jesus.

2. *Tears of penance.*

Sin is indeed the mystery of iniquity. It wounded and bruised our Saviour. Nails and spears were the tools it employed. "We have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins." Is. liii, 4, 5. "For the wickedness of my people I struck him." v, 8. Sin is, therefore, a detestable monster, since it attacks even the divine person of Jesus Christ. And you shed no tears? If you had committed but one sin, the sight of Jesus wounded for our sins should draw from your eyes burning tears of sorrow. But you may have committed so many sins that you can say: "My iniquities are gone over my head." Ps. xxxvii, 5. Sins of anger, enmity, impurity, intemperance, etc. Each sin was a wound to the Lord, having, in some sense, renewed his crucifixion. "They crucify again to themselves the Son of God." Heb. vi, 6. And is it possible that you have no tears of penance at the sight of your wounded Jesus!

II. By gazing with faith and confidence on the wounds of our Saviour, our soul feels a great *consolation*. The wounds of our Lord cry out to you :

1. Behold, how tenderly God loves you!

"God is charity," says St. John. The charity of God palpably appears to us in the stable at Bethlehem, in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. It shines in the most brilliant light out of the wounds of Jesus on Calvary. How ardent is the charity which suffers hands and feet to be pierced, and the heart to be divided in two parts, all for the sake of mercy. "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us." I

John iii, 16. There is no consolation like the consciousness of being loved by God.

2. God has made it possible for every one to reach heaven :

a. For the *sinner*. He finds reconciliation in the sacred wounds of Jesus. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." I John i, 7. Every crime, however grievous, can be remitted through the wounds of the Lord. How great a consolation to the sinner !

b. The *just* receive all grace from the wounds of Jesus Christ. They are right in hoping from these sacred wounds grace in abundance, to progress in virtue, and to meet a happy death. A great consolation indeed !

III. The soul gains *courage* and *strength* from the aspect of our Saviour's wounds.

She is encouraged to *sacrifice* all for Jesus.

The wounds of our Saviour bear testimony to his infinite desire of sacrificing himself for us. For he received them out of love for us, and through them gave his precious blood for us, together with his very life. The Saints sacrificed themselves in return. The thought of the wounds of Jesus inspired many to distribute their treasures and to live in the desert ; it animated many to resign the most splendid positions in life and to dwell in solitude, and encouraged many to sacrifice blood and life. (Hermits. Martyrs. Virgins). Ever since the cross, with our wounded Saviour hanging on it, was planted on Calvary, the spirit of self-sacrifice has entered into the world, and the lives of many thousands have become lives of mortification and self-denial. "I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ." Philip. iii, 8.

The pains of our Lord in his wounds were unutterable. He hung on the Cross by the nails which pierced his hands and feet. They burned as if on fire. And shall we refuse to suffer with him ? Whenever St. Theresa looked at the wounds of Jesus, she used to exclaim : "I will not die, but suffer." How cheerfully the Saints endured their afflictions ! How many pious souls follow them in our days ! If no consoling word is of any avail

to the suffering Christian one gaze at the Crucifix will yet comfort him.

Peroration: Let us then often behold the wounds of our Lord with tender devotion. Shed tears of compassion and penance. "One single tear shed over the Passion of Christ outweighs a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and a fast on water and bread for years." St. Augustine. You will be consoled in every position of life, and carry your cross after Jesus. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also in Christ doth our comfort abound." II Cor. i, 5. "In such experience of tribulation they have had abundance of joy." viii, 2.

Joseph Schuen.

IV.

MAN'S THREE-FOLD PEACE PERVERTED BY SATAN.

That we might be moved by his love, God promised a kingdom to everyone of us, (Lk. xxii, 29) which is more desirable than all imaginable goods. (Apoc. xxi, 10). Everyone using earnest efforts can obtain it. As men are too careless, God has invented another means to excite our will, the desire for peace. Whatever man does, he does it to find peace. He eats to find peace against hunger, he rests to find peace against fatigue, etc. It is Jesus, the Prince of peace foretold by the prophets, who restored peace with God, with our neighbor, and with ourselves; and who exhorts us to love God, and take his yoke upon us, that we may find rest to our souls. But Satan, fearing that, for the sake of peace, men might be converted to God, falsified the true peace, issuing a false coin under the same stamp.

PART I.

• SATAN FALSIFIES PEACE WITH OUR NEIGHBOR.

I. God sends us into this world, to be his children, and to be brethren and sisters to one another. He commanded us to consider every man as our neighbor.

1. He commands us that we should love one another, and treat our fellow-men as we desire to be treated by them.

2. He does not command that we should love our neighbor more than ourselves; that to help our neighbor we should do without necessary things, or give him what he is not in need of.

II. Satan, seeing that man, by following the same doctrine, would be happy, invented false love, false peace

1. By prompting him to seek peace and love with those who resemble him in wickedness. Wickedness is the only bond in the Infernal Empire. But the peace sought for is a false one, pregnant with torment, eternal torment.

2. Indeed sinners eagerly seek this false peace. Thieves seek the friendship of thieves. Unchaste persons seek the friendship of unchaste persons, etc. What abominable perversion of the divine precept of loving our neighbor what Satanic falsifying of God's word of peace!

PART II.

HE FALSIFIES THE PEACE WITH OURSELVES.

I. According to *God's* will, body and soul should be in concord with each other; the body should not desire what is detrimental to the soul. But as the concupiscence of the body is great in man, his soul should master the body bravely, so as not to have the sweet divine peace disturbed. We are exhorted to this

1. By our *origin*. Our soul has been created to the image of the glorious Godhead; wherefore sin is against her nature, and she can find no peace whilst she allows sin to enter. The noble soul is the queen, the ignoble body is her servant. If you degrade your soul to the condition of a servant, it is a state of revolution, not of peace; and the body will be her cruel tyrant.

2. By our *conscience*. After you have sinned, your soul is aware of her peace being disturbed, and she says: "Woe to me! what is it that I have done?" for she knows that she has to suffer torments in consequence of her evil deed.

3. By the *examples of the Saints*. Although it is not possible without a wonder of grace, to avoid every venial sin, yet there are, and have been, innumerable souls who have mastered

their own bodies so as never to fall into mortal sin, and very seldom into venial sin. Why should you not have the same power? And then there would be peace in you. For the venial sins, although numerous, would not throw you into hell; whilst one mortal sin, if not repented of, would cause this fatal judgment.

II. *Satan*, knowing how great is your desire for peace, and knowing also that peace is possible only where authority and obedience meet, inverts the order:

1. He renders the *body* the ruler. This being of earthly origin, desires only earthly things, raising itself against all that is beyond the reach of the senses.

2. He advises the *soul* to obey and submit to the body; but the peace promised to her by thus submitting is a false peace.

PART III.

HE FALSIFIES THE PEACE WITH GOD.

I. It is according to *God's* will that we should have perfect peace with him, which is only possible by endeavoring to be of one mind with him, and never to fall away from him by mortal sin. We are exhorted to this

1. By the *angels*. Those who kept peace with God at the time of probation, enjoy now everlasting peace in the ocean of heavenly bliss. Those who broke it, are tormented by everlasting dissension in the pit of brimstone.

2. By our *first parents*. No sooner had they committed sin, than their peace was at an end, and they had to leave Paradise.

3. By *Jesus*, who to restore peace with God, descended from heaven, suffered and died, whose doctrine has the one object, of teaching us how to guard this precious peace by resembling God, and avoiding sin.

II. *Satan* knows that all disquietude of the soul originates from discord with God, in consequence of which man has lost his supernatural likeness to God. And that this restlessness of his soul may not be the cause of his return to God, *Satan* tries to turn him away from God entirely. As a recompense, he offers

to him peace with himself, consisting in the sinner's complying with his will and resembling him. There are especially three kinds of sinners resembling the devil.

1. *Heretics*. Satan breaking peace with God, left the communion of the angels, and ever since strives to entice men from God's kingdom. In like manner heretics, breaking peace with God, left the communion of the Holy Church, and afterwards left no stone unmoved in order to induce as many as possible to commit the same wickedness.

2. *Those who sin against the Holy Ghost*. Like the devil, they hate and resist grace with dreadful obduracy.

3. *Avaricious and covetous sinners*; who resemble the devil most of all. *a*. Because they sin incessantly. For they are thinking of their treasures without interruption, and their injustice of usury urges them day night. *b*. As the devil is never satiated with his actions, but is ever meditating new ones, so the covetous sinner is never satisfied; his appetite increases with its gratification. *c*. Satan never repents of his sins; heither does the miser.

Peroration: It is a shame to seek peace with the devil instead of with God. Call to mind that he who is a companion of the devil on earth, will be his companion in hell for ever.

Berthold of Ratisbon.

Second Sunday After Easter.

III.

PARENTS SHOULD BE THE GOOD SHEPHERDS OF THEIR CHILDREN.

Under the symbol of a good shepherd, Jesus represents himself as a pattern to all those to whom Divine Providence has given a charge over others. Whoever has a right to command others, is in a moral sense their shepherd. The foremost amongst these are of course parents. As Jesus was the good shepherd of his own, so they should be the good shepherds of their children, namely :

I. BY GIVING THEM THE NECESSARY INSTRUCTION.

Parents, instruct your children

1. *In the science of religion.* Let me call your attention

a. *To your duty in this regard.*

First, Reason teaches this duty. In olden times, when schools were scarce, parents were the only teachers of their children. "With how great delight I represent to my mind Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, in their leisure hours, and after the close of their work, sitting in the midst of their children and childrens' children, and instructing a numerous family in the worship of God, on the benefits bestowed upon their fathers, on Adam's fall, on the necessity of redemption!" St. Chrysostom. Although we keep up our own schools with the help of God, to which, I trust, you send your children regularly, parents are still the principal teachers of their children. "You are obliged to give instruction in your houses, as the bishop in our churches." St. Augustine. "You are the apostles of your children; your house is your church, and if we priests are bound to guard their souls and give an account of them, how much more you, O parents! to whom their education is particularly confided, and under whose roof God has placed them from the beginning of their life." St. Chrysostom.

Secondly, Holy Scripture inculcates the same duty. "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger, but bring them

up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." Eph. vi, 4. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8.

b. To the manner of giving them the necessary instruction.

You should, in the first place, *commence early*. Experience teaches us that children learn quite easy evil things; why should they be incapable of learning good things? Their hearts are like wax: The image of God may be imprinted in them with the same success as the image of Satan. "Hast thou children? instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood." Eccles. vii, 25.

You should, in the second place, *incessantly* continue their education. Then your efforts will be crowned with the desired success. Your children will, in adult age, either not fall, or, if they should once fall, in the heat of passion, will certainly rise again sooner than those who were not well instructed. "Teach your children, that they meditate on the commandments of the Lord, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest on the way, and when thou liest down and risest up." Deut. xi, 19. A splendid example of admonitions given by a father to his son is recorded Tob. iv.

2. *In the labors of their state of life.* You owe this to God's honor and the welfare of your children. Children not being used to work from their childhood, turn out bad Christians, as Scripture and experience teaches. They become habituated to an idle life, to which they cling in their adult age also. "It is a proverb: A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii, 6. "Idleness hath taught much evil." Eccles. xxxiii, 29. Accordingly children who were but little instructed, often become rakes, and unprofitable fathers and mothers.

II. BY CORRECTING THEIR FAULTS.

God has made you not only teachers of your children, but also the judges of their conduct. You have the duty, right and authority of punishing or rewarding your children according to their deserts. Both ought to be done

1. *Under the guidance of your reason.* Your line of conduct in this respect should be marked

a. By *moderation*. Do not punish your children unreasonably, but only after your admonitions and reprimands have been in vain; nor in the heat of passion: "Be ye angry, and sin not." Ps. iv, 5. Punish them in charity, for the purpose of amending their morals. "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell." Prov. xiii, 24.

b. By *earnestness*. "Give thy son his way, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he shall make thee sorrowful." Eccles. xxx, 9. "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him correcteth him betimes. Prov. xiii, 24. A warning example is Heli I Kings ii.

2. *With justice and fairness.*

a. Your chastisements ought to be *proportionate* to the fault. "Unless you moderate the punishment, or observe some proportion between the punishment and the offence, you will impart far greater vices to your children, than those which you intend to uproot." St. Chrysostom.

b. The punishment ought to be allotted and exacted *with impartiality*. You must never let pass unpunished in one child faults for which you chastise the other. The spoiled child is not made better in this way, and the rest are provoked to indignation. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger; lest they be discouraged." Col. iii, 21. Making one of your children a "pet child," is a continual danger for the peace of your family.

III. BY SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE BEFORE THEM.

Example is a natural language, which unconsciously persuades, and imperceptibly penetrates the soul, forming good or bad habits, especially when this language is spoken by persons with whom you daily converse. Children are very close observers of the conduct of their parents; they imitate whatever they perceive in them, and often retain the impressions thereof to their old age.

1. Therefore, ye parents, take heed not to *scandalize* them in any way. Be cautious

a. In your *conversation*. Children are over-curious, and

remember many things. "Behold, how small a fire kindleth a great wood." James iii, 5. "The child speaks the language of those in the midst of whom it was born and trained." St. Augustine.

b. In your *actions*. There are actions, not bad in themselves, which you are bound to conceal before your children. "All things are lawful to me but all are not expedient." I Cor. vi, 12. St. Jerome gave Mother Laeta this rule of conduct. "Your daughter shall, neither in you, nor in her father, see anything that she cannot imitate without sin."

2. Strive to *edify* them by acts of true piety.

a. Else your *admonitions are in vain*. They will say to you, at least in their heart: "Physician, heal thyself." Lk. iv, 23. "Cast first the beam out of thy own eyes." vi, 42. Æsop represents this truth by the fable of the old lobster, who bade the young lobsters to go forward, instead of backward. They tried the task, but seeing the old lobster going backward now as ever, they said: Father, show us how to do it, and we will follow thee.

b. In *vain are your threatenings* and punishments. You will implant in their hearts neither love for virtue, nor detestation of vice; on the contrary, vice will strike deeper roots, because nourished by your own example. Oh! that all children could say of their parents, what St. Augustine said of his mother, Monica: "She has supported her admonitions not only by tears, but by her own example."

Peroration: Well, then, Christian parents, be the good shepherds of your children by instruction, discipline, and good example. You owe this to their welfare, to the welfare of church and state, and the salvation of your own souls.

Wansidel.

IV.

THE FATHER OF THE FAMILY OUGHT TO BE A GOOD SHEPHERD.

The great flock of Jesus Christ is divided into smaller flocks, which are put under the care of their respective shepherds. Such

a small portion of Christ's flock is the Christian family, and its head is its shepherd appointed by God himself. Oh, that every father of a Christian family could truly say of himself: "I am the good shepherd!" I will explain to you the qualities required in him in order to be a good shepherd.

I. *He should be kind and meek towards the members of his family.*

1. It is by *love* and *meekness* that he wins hearts. Take the poor man, who feeds his flock, for your model.

2. *Jesus requires it* of everyone to whom he entrusts a part of his flock. It was three times that he said to Peter: "Lovest thou me?" before he appointed him pastor of his lambs and sheep. John xxi, 15. He intimated that he must be kind to them, which he would not be, unless he loved his divine master.

3. By *roughness* and *pride* you will prevent many good deeds. The Holy Ghost warns you: "Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee." Eccles. iv, 35. All living creatures in the household of nature tremble at the roaring of the lion. Parents, fathers of families, how is your conduct to your children and those under your command?

II. Like a good shepherd he should *lead them upon a wholesome pasture*, and keep them from unwholesome food.

1. The spiritual food for the family are:

a. The words of the father, wherefore he should avoid wicked language, but speak honest and edifying words. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." I Cor. xv, 33.

b. His deeds, his example.

2. Words and example of the father exercise a great influence:

a. By reason of his *authority*. *Qualis rex, talis grex*. When Mary Magdalen anointed the feet of Jesus, the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. John xii, 3. The good odor of a father's deeds will penetrate through the whole house too, "the odor of life unto life." II Cor ii, 16. No sooner had

the ruler whose sick son was healed by Jesus, believed in him, than his whole house believed with him. John iv, 53.

b. By reason of the *daily sight* of your manners. How many innocent souls are defiled in early youth by the daily bad example of the parents! "She ought not to see anything neither in you, nor in her father, at seeing which the daughter might sin," St. Jerome wrote to Laeta.

III. *He should protect them against wolves and birds of prey.*

1. Who are the *wolves*?

a. The *devils* who lie in wait for the perdition of souls day and night.

b. Every *bad man*, every seducer, every heretic, and heretical book. "A man that is a heretic avoid." Tit. iii, 10.

2. Wherefore you must *watch* over your sheep.

a. They are bought for a great price, the blood of Jesus Christ.

b. They are so near to you, your sons, daughters, your own flesh and bone. As the High-Priest had always before his eyes the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on the stones of the rational of judgment fastened on his breast, so should parents and fathers never lose sight of their dear children who are at the same time God's chosen children.

3. Consider the *reward* or *punishment* awaiting you.

a. *Reward*. Not only priests who fulfill their duty faithfully, but also fathers of families, who are good householders, are esteemed worthy of double honor (I Tim, v, 17), before God and men.

b. *Punishment* for the careless householder. For "if any man have not care of his own and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I myself come upon the shepherds. I will require my flock at their hand." Ezech. xxxiv, 10.

Peroration: May Jesus, the good shepherd, through his grace strengthen all those who have charge of his sheep, and lead shepherd and flock into the land of promise!

Venedien.

Third Sunday After Easter.

III.

ON THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE OF HOPE.

“So also you now, indeed, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.” John xvi, 22. When Jesus saw his disciples in grief and sorrow, because he had spoken to them of his approaching death, he cheered their mind by the promise of everlasting joy: “Your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.” We infer from this that the strong and secure means of keeping up our courage and good cheer in tribulations is the hope of everlasting joys. And this truth, bearing important consequences, I will explain to you. What is the virtue of hope; what does it effect in our soul; and wherein does its exercise consist?

I. WHAT IS THE VIRTUE OF HOPE?

1. Hope is a supernatural virtue, by baptism infused into our soul with faith and charity, being one of the three theological virtues, because God is its immediate object, from whose bounty we hope for everlasting happiness. This divine will is manifested by his unerring promises and the pledges given us by the Incarnation of his only-begotten Son, and our adoption as children. And being convinced of our own inability of performing acts which merit heaven, we firmly hope for divine assistance. No less is it known to us that we must co-operate with this divine assistance, or grace, by faithfully observing the commandments. The reason is because heaven is not only a present, but a reward also. How many then are the pillars on which our hope of heaven rests? Two pillars: the divine promise, and our co-operation. The first is solid and immovable; the second is somewhat feeble and unreliable. For this reason our hope is always accompanied with wholesome and sacred fear. We possess, therefore, the theological virtue of hope, when we expect

with unswerving confidence, through the mercy of God, to obtain heaven, provided we, on our part, do what we are obliged to do.

2. From this you may infer how much two classes of people deceive themselves: first, those who; although living in mortal sin, feel quite easy and secure in regard to their eternal salvation. Second, those who, although living in the state and habit of mortal sin, put so great confidence in certain devotional practices, in honor of the Saints, and particularly of the Blessed Virgin, as not to doubt that they will earn the heavenly crown by their intercession. They deceive themselves, as their hope is not the theological virtue of hope, but devilish presumption, which is a rash and foolish confidence of salvation, without endeavoring to live up to the commandments of God. Adults cannot be saved unless they co-operate by their own merits with the merits of Jesus Christ. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," said our Saviour in plain words. Whosoever, therefore, hopes for heaven by any other means but by the keeping of the commandments, his hope is no virtue, but rather a vice. He ought to know that God's promises are based upon avoiding sin and exercising virtue. True, God has promised forgiveness at whatever time the sinner becomes *converted*: "The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness." Ezech. xxxiii, 12. But the same God has threatened the sinner who defers his conversion to an indefinite time, with everlasting death. "Add not sin upon sin, and say not: The mercy of the Lord is great; he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from him." Eccles. v, 5, 6, 7. God forgives the sinner whenever he repents of his sins and is firmly resolved thenceforth to keep God's commandments; whilst he cannot hope for his mercy, as long as he continues living in sin.

3. With regard to the hope and confidence which sinners put in the intercession and protection of the Saints, especially of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I say to you, with the Holy Church, that we have every reason to expect much from our Patron

Saints, and the most from the Blessed Mother of God. None the less is it true, that not one of the Saints will even so much as attempt to save you, except by leading you back to the only road to heaven, *i. e.*, the keeping of the commandments. Consequently certain prayers, fasting, and the like, will not secure your salvation, unless you practice all this with the intention of obtaining the grace to fulfill God's holy will, and at the same time endeavor to keep his commandments. If you ever heard or read that the Blessed Virgin, or St. Joseph, or any other of the Saints, have, by their intercession, obtained heaven for great sinners at the end of their life, you must not put your confidence in examples of that kind. For, assuming that they are true, they are miraculous instances of divine mercy, the ground of which we are unable to explore. But nobody can hope, without being guilty of presumption to be saved by a miracle.

II. THE VIRTUE OF HOPE INSPIRES US WITH COURAGE AND STRENGTH.

After having explained the nature of the virtue of hope, let me now speak to you of the strength and courage we receive from this virtue toward accomplishing what seems arduous, and toward suffering patiently afflictions.

1. If the hope of earthly rewards encourages the husbandman, the artist, the soldier, the seaman, etc., to continue in their pursuits, and to overcome all difficulties in their way, shall not the hope for the everlasting joys of paradise be more efficacious? What induced St. Paul, St. Anthony, St. Romuald, and their disciples to hide themselves in deserts, and to live there a life full of mortifications? The hope of eternal felicity. What induced St. Alexius, Rochus, Bernard or William to forsake all worldly joys, riches and honors? The hope of everlasting glory. What consoled and cheered St. Lidwina when she patiently suffered uninterrupted pains for thirty-eight long years? What encouraged St. Theresa in her many afflictions of long duration to persevere? The hope of the joys of heaven. The hope of

the joys of heaven has led thousands of martyrs through the most cruel torments to triumph and victory. What virtue is it which erected our monasteries and convents? What, which induced thousands to live either secluded from the world, absorbed in the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, or to spend their lives for the welfare of afflicted mankind? It is the virtue of hope.

2. How is it that the same hope does not induce you to make sacrifices, or even to fulfill your most indispensable duties? Why is it that, in spite of this glorious hope, there are many amongst us whose heart clings to the earth, or is even buried in the mire; as the avaricious, the intemperate, the unchaste? Do you know why the hope of eternity has so little influence on you? Because you neither know nor reflect on the value of the everlasting riches. You should therefore often meditate on the heavenly delights prepared for you; the repose of your body and soul, the society of the angels and the saints, the aspect of the human nature of Jesus, and the intuition of the Triune God, and the eternal duration of all these joys.

Besides, let me call to your mind that we are strictly obliged to make acts of hope from time to time.

III. THERE ARE SPECIAL OCCASIONS ON WHICH IT IS VERY ADVISABLE TO MAKE ACTS OF HOPE :

1. When we are to preform a good work, from which we feel an *aversion*. You feel for instance a dislike to go to church, although you have no valid excuse for not going. Remember your eternal reward. Next Sunday is the day when the members of the sodality to membership of which you inscribe your name, regularly receive the holy sacrament. You feel something like disgust. Remember your eternal reward, and go. You must know that the least good work will be rewarded with an increase of your glory, and the least increase of eternal glory surpasses the glory of this world. Follow King David who vanquished all dislike of good works by reflecting on the everlasting reward.

"I have inclined my heart to thy justifications for ever, for the reward." Ps. cxviii, 112.

2. When God visits you with *sickness*, or poverty or any other affliction, elicit acts of hope after the manner of St. Paul, who in his many afflictions consoled himself by saying: "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17. Thus he never lost courage. "In all things we suffer tribulations, but are not distressed. We are cast down, but we perish not." v, 8 and 9. On the contrary he rejoiced in his very tribulations. "I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulations." II Cor. vii, 4. Let us take an example from St. Saturnin who, suffering the most atrocious torments, asked for greater chastisements, frequently repeating the words: "I wilfully suffer all torments, no temporal torment lasting long." Let us follow St. Francis the Seraphic, who in his excruciating pains used to sing with delight: "The joy awaiting me there is so great, that pains fill me with delight." All things here on earth will come to an end, and our tribulations also. "A patient man shall bear for a time; and afterwards joy shall be retored to him." Eccles. i, 29.

3. When men *revile* you with words, and the devil attacks you with *temptations*. Remember the words of our Saviour: "Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, because your reward is very great in heaven." Mt. v, 11. And if you withstand the attacks of your enemy, the words of the Lamb of God are addressed to you: "To him that shall overcome, I will grant to sit with me on my throne." Apoc. iii, 21. This is so sure that St. James calls blessed *before death* the man who endures temptation. "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation: when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him." James i, 12.

Peroration: Two young men met once a hermit in his hermitage which was hidden in the dense underwood. Finding him

of good cheer, so much so that the beams of his inward joy radiated in his countenance, they asked for an explanation of his joyful heart. Whereupon he led the visitors to the only window of his hermitage. It was so small however and surrounded by so many trees and bushes, that they could see only a small piece of the sky. This little space of heaven, said the hermit, is the explanation of my cheerfulness. Whenever my arduous mortifications appear too hard, I hasten to this window to look up to heaven, remembering the everlasting reward. Whenever the enemy of God and of the human family tempts me with the honors, riches, and joys of the world, I hasten to the window to compare them with heavenly honors, riches, and joys awaiting me, if I persevere. The two young men were overcome with emotion at the simplicity of this saintly old man, and made the firm resolution often to remember heaven and the heavenly reward. Let us do in like manner.

J. B. Campadelli.

Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph.

II.

THE PICTURE OF ST. JOSEPH.

“Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.” Mt. i, 19. St. Joseph, whose figure, as we are reminded by the Breviary, was Joseph of Egypt, and to whom in the epistle of Holy Mass, the Church applies the scriptural eulogium on Moses, is represented by sacred art as carrying the divine child in his arms, and holding in his right hand a lily. As this picture inculcates in our mind the dignity of St. Joseph, and the great confidence we ought to put in him, we will make it the subject of our present meditation.

PART I.

THE DIVINE CHILD IN THE ARMS OF ST. JOSEPH.

This picture symbolizes the *dignity* of St. Joseph as foster-father of Jesus, and his *paternal love* for the divine infant.

1. The Patriarch and prophets of the Old Covenant are venerable in our eyes, because God communicated to them the mystery of the Incarnation of his Son. St. Joseph excels them all in dignity, as he was deemed worthy to behold the Son of God face to face, and to live with him and his mother for many years under one roof, to provide him with food and raiment, in short, to be to him what a father is to his child. Jesus, who was regarded as the “carpenter’s son,” respected Joseph, as if he were his son. At the command of Josue, the sun stood still in the midst of heaven; Joseph commanded for thirty years the only-begotten Son of God, the creator of heaven and earth. *He was subject to them.* He is surpassed in dignity only by one Saint, the Blessed Mother of God. God has by the name ‘father’ conferred greater honor on St. Joseph than upon all the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles; for these have only received the name of “servants of Christ.” St. Joseph has received the name “father of Christ.” St. Basil.

Let us in admiration thank God for the sublime dignity conferred on St. Joseph, and at the same time let us be mindful of our own supernatural dignity. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (father)." We are children of God, a dignity so great that St. John exclaims in amazement. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be named and should be the sons of God." I John iii, 1. Let us lead a life worthy of our dignity, as St. Joseph, whom the Holy Ghost eulogizes as having lived according to his dignity. "Be you, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." Mt. v, 48.

2. St. Joseph, carrying and embracing the divine child, reminds us of his tender love for him. He arose the same night on which the angel informed him that the child's life was being sought by Herod, and set out upon a long and wearisome journey, to dwell in the land of the bondage of his fathers, where his nation was hated and despised. When the child Jesus had remained in the temple, Joseph and Mary sought him three days. How great his anguish was during these three days we may infer from the words of the Blessed Virgin addressing her son: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." Lk. ii, 48. All his thoughts were concentrated upon the Child Jesus; for him he was at work from early dawn until night.

How instructive is this example of St. Joseph, especially for you, Christian parents! You are obliged by industry and frugality to provide the necessities of life for your children; and to habituate them to a useful occupation. Above all, you must use all efforts to make them good Christians, so that they may reach their eternal destiny. "You are," as St. Chrysostom says, "the Apostles of your children; your house is your church. And if we priests have to guard their souls, and give an account for them, how much more you, into whose house God has sent them?" "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8.

And not only parents, but all Christians, should raise up their eyes to St. Joseph, and take an example from his solicitude for the child. To every one of us the care of a divine child has been committed. This child is our soul, the beautiful daughter of the Heavenly Father. The care for this child is the task of our life, so that our Saviour addresses us in these solemn words: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mt. xvi, 26.

Thus, the Divine Child in the arms of St. Joseph reminds us of the high dignity and solicitude of this Saint; it being at the same time an earnest warning for us to appreciate our dignity as children of God, and an exhortation to parents to be solicitous for the welfare of their children, and to every one of us to take care of our own immortal souls.

PART II.

THE LILY IN THE HAND OF ST. JOSEPH.

We may distinguish in the lily its color, odor, and its medicinal virtue; and in each respect it has its significance in the hand of St. Joseph.

1. The lily, being of the purest white color, is in the hand of St. Joseph a symbol of his virginal purity. We admire Joseph of Egypt, who preferred being sent into prison, and even to death, rather than losing the flower of virginity. Greater is our admiration for St Joseph the spouse of Mary, who anxiously preserved his virginity all his life time. When he was espoused to Mary, he was aware of her virginal vow, and therefore by taking her for his own, he only intended to carry out the grandest design of Divine Providence.

Happy souls, who after the example of St. Joseph preserve virginal purity! That which gold is among metals, and diamond among precious stones, virginity is among moral virtues; it is the most precious and sublime of all. It elevates man above the weaknesses and inclinations of his nature, embellishing his entire being. "Virginal souls," says St. Gregory, "imitate in

their terrestrial body the life of angels." Verily, they surpass the holy angels, in so far as they acquire by strenuous and constant efforts what the angels possess by nature. Jesus entertains the tenderest affections for them, and in heaven they follow the Lamb wherever he goeth. "Rejoice," St. Augustine once said to the virgins espoused to God, "Rejoice! Great is the honor of being espoused to him whose mother to be the purest queen of all virgins was alone found worthy."

Christian youth, if you deem yourselves called to perpetual virginity, regard this as the greatest grace of heaven; for if you, with the with the lily of virginity in your hand, appear before Jesus, you will possess him in heaven as your spouse. If you do not think that perpetual virginity is your vocation, guard this snow-white lily until you enter the married state. Whoever has lost this precious treasure, let him beg pardon, on this day before the picture of St. Joseph, and do penance. And ye married people, observe conjugal chastity, and never burden your conscience with impure actions.

2. Moreover, the being distinguished for its *fragrant odor* is the symbol of good example. There is no virtue of which St. Joseph is not our model. Behold his *humility*. Although an offspring of the royal family of David and the foster-father of the son of God, he did not pretend to be more than a poor carpenter, and endured patiently his many humiliations. Behold his *obedience* toward God and men. God commands him to take unto him Mary his wife, to flee into Egypt, to return into his own country, to live in Nazareth, etc., and Joseph obeyed without reluctance, as he had obeyed the command of Cæsar Augustus. Behold his *meekness* and *humility*, when seeking a shelter in Bethlehem for his espoused wife and the Saviour, the Bethlehemites refused them a lodging.

We are all obliged to set a good example to our fellow-men. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Mt. v, 16. "By good example more souls are converted than by miracles." St. Chrysostom.

3. The lily is used for *medical purposes* also, a salutary oil being prepared from it. For this reason, the lily in the hand of St. Joseph may remind us of the great *confidence* we should put in the intercession of this Saint. We are right in expecting from the foster-father of Jesus more abundant graces than from other Saints. Who could suppose that Jesus would refuse to grant a petition to him from whom he received so many proofs of love in his temporal life! "If some Saints," says St. Bernard, "received the power of assisting as in some circumstances, St. Joseph can help us in every need." "I do not remember," says St. Therese, "ever having asked St. Joseph for anything which he did not grant. * * * It has been my experience that this glorious Saint helps in every need. * * The Lord seems to intimate that, as he was subject to him on earth, so he does in heaven whatever St. Joseph asks him." In a special sense St. Joseph is venerated as patron of the dying, for which St. Alphonse of Liguori assigns the three following reasons: First, because Jesus loves him not only as friend, but as father, for which reason his intercession is far more efficacious than that of other Saints. Second, because Joseph, as a reward for having protected the child Jesus against Herod, received the power of protecting the dying against the devil. Third, because the assistance he received from Jesus and Mary in the hour of his death gave him the right of procuring a holy and quiet death for his clients.

Peroration: Let me, in conclusion, say to you what Pharaoh said to the people in distress: "Go to Joseph." Gen. xli, 55. Go to Joseph, to admire his dignity and zeal as foster-father of Jesus, and learn from him to respect your dignity as children of God by a holy life and zealous care for your subjects, particularly your own immortal soul. Go to Joseph, to admire and imitate his purity and his good example of all virtues. "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Gal. v, 16. Go to Joseph, invoking him every day, that he may assist you now, and at the hour of your death.

J. E. Zollner.

Fourth Sunday After Easter.

III.

THE TASK PERFORMED IN THE CHURCH BY THE HOLY GHOST.

“When he, the spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth.” John xvi, 13. The Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles in the form of *fire*; the reason being, because he produces spiritually the same effects as fire produces materially. What then are the effects of fire? The following: It warms, burns, enlightens, and presents gold and precious stones in their splendor. According to the Gospel of this day, the Holy Ghost produces the same effects. He produces warmth, by consoling us in our afflictions; hence his name Paraclete. He convinces the world of sin; behold the burning fire! He teaches all truth; behold the enlightened fire! Finally, he glorifies Jesus Christ; behold the irradiating fire! Let us reflect on these four functions of the Holy Ghost.

I. THE HOLY GHOST CONSOLES US.

This is the chief function of the Holy Ghost, whom we therefore call “the Paraclete.”

1. He *encourages* the faithful by reminding them of the everlasting *reward*, especially in affliction and tribulations. He poured out so sweet consolation into the soul of St. Andrew, when hanging on the cross, that he did not wish to be taken down from it. In the era of persecution, he consoled the Christians by numerous miracles, and sometimes by dreadful punishments inflicted on their persecutors.

2. The Holy Ghost *consoles* the faithful by reminding them of divine *mercy*, after they have committed sin, repeating to them the words of the Saviour: “Be of good cheer, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

II. THE HOLY GHOST CONVINCES THE WORLD OF SIN.

1. By the *sting of conscience*. This is likened to a watchful dog announcing strangers entering the house (i. e., sins

entering the soul). Therefore God said to Cain: "If thou do ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door?" Those who, after grievous sins, have no sense of their vices, have reason to fear that the Holy Ghost has forsaken them and delivered them over to their own perversity.

2. By the *admonitions of preachers*, and the good examples set before us. We should listen to the voice of those who hold the place of God in respect to us, and follow the edifying example of our friends, of those living in religious communities, and of the Saints.

III. THE HOLY GHOST TEACHES ALL TRUTH.

1. He taught the Church the words and deeds of Jesus Christ, by inspiring the Apostles to preach only the truth, both by oral and written word; and by preserving Scripture and Tradition.

2. Moreover, he suggested to the Popes and councils what ought to be regarded as the deposit of faith, and called forth holy and learned men, to defend the Church against the attacks of new heretics, as St. Ignatius and his disciples against Protestantism.

IV. HE GLORIFIES JESUS CHRIST.

He bears testimony before the whole world, that Jesus is the Messiah, God and man, and his doctrine is from heaven. He achieves this

1. By imparting to the Apostles and their successors the gift of eloquence and wisdom. St. Anthony the Abbot, a man without education as he was, spoke on Christian doctrine so efficaciously that the philosophers were confounded at hearing him.

2. By performing so many wonderful acts of virtue through members of the Church, and by encouraging thousands and thousands to follow the evangelical counsels.

Peroration: Let us implore the Holy Ghost to be to us such a fire also, to console us, to convince us of sin, to teach us all truth, and to glorify Jesus Christ in us by meritorious deeds and a holy life.

M. Faber.

IV.

OBJECT AND MOTIVES OF CHRISTIAN HOPE.

Sorrow filled the hearts of his disciples, because Jesus had announced to them his going home to the Father. To console them, he promised them the Holy Ghost. "It is expedient for you, that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." John xvi, 7. Trusting the word of their master, they confidently hoped for the coming of the Holy Ghost. We all put our hope in Jesus Christ, and if we were deprived of this Christian hope, we should be unhappy. Now there are especially two questions on Christian hope to which I will give you an answer.

PART I.

WHAT IS IT THAT WE MAY HOPE FOR?

We should hope for everything promised by Jesus Christ. He promised us eternal happiness, and the means of obtaining it. We therefore hope for

I. Eternal happiness. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Mk. xvi, 16. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Lk. xix, 10.

II. The means of obtaining it. Wherefore we expect

1. Help in spiritual need, that God will

a. Illuminate our understanding, so as to enable us to come to the knowledge of truth; and that we may know what we have to believe, and to do, in order to please God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder of them that seek him." Heb. xi, 6. "This is life everlasting: that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii, 3.

b. Strengthen our will, that we may not only believe, but also live according to our faith, and that we may carry out God's holy will even when surrounded with the greatest difficulties.

"He that loveth not, abideth in death." John iii, 14. "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Rom. ii, 13.

c. Forgive us our sins.

2. Help in bodily needs.

a. That God will preserve our life, providing us with clothing and food. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. vi, 33.

b. That he will take away, or at least soften, our tribulations, if it be for our benefit. "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii, 28.

c. That he will give us strength to bear all tribulations with patience and endurance, if they be means of our salvation. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." I Cor. x, 13. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life." James i, 12.

PART II.

THE MOTIVES OF OUR HOPE.

We entertain the above hope

I. Because Jesus, through his infinite merits, has obtained for us the claim of eternal happiness. "No man cometh to the Father, but by me." "There is no other name under heaven given to man, whereby we must be saved." Act. iv, 12.

II. Because Jesus promised us all this, demanding expressly of us that we put our confidence in him. 1. In regard to the necessities of life. "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body more than the raiment?" Mt. vi, 25. "Cast all your solicitude upon the Lord, for he hath care of you." I Pet. v, 7. 2. In regard to the wants of your soul. How frequently did he say: "Thy faith hath made thee whole!" "Have faith, thy sins are forgiven thee."

III. Because Jesus daily justifies our confidence. Every day he preserves our life, gives us food and raiment, strengthens us in temptations, warns us against sins, etc.

IV. Because it is by this confidence only, that we are enabled to make progress in virtue, and lead a life of contentment. For who would dare to struggle against the numerous and powerful enemies of his salvation, unless being strengthened by confidence in God's help and grace? "By the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace in me hath not been void." I Cor. xv, 10. "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me." Philip iv, 13.

Peroration: Never give up Christian hope, for it is the staff by the support of which we climb up to our heavenly "home." At the same time call to mind, that we cannot hope reasonably, unless we make sure of divine grace, unless we use every good received at the hands of God in accordance with his holy will. It is thus that we shall increase in virtue and obtain salvation.

Bishop Wagner.

Fifth Sunday After Easter.

III. CONDITIONS OF PRAYER.

“And it came to pass that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him: Lord, teach us to pray.” Lk. xi, 11. God showed us the efficacy of prayer in a striking manner by the example of Moses. “When Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame; but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame.” Exod. xvii, 11. If our petitions are not always granted, the Apostle St. James gives us the explanation thereof, when he says: “You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss.” James iv, 3. Prayer being, however, absolutely necessary for the performance of good works, and for salvation, we have urgent reason to say with the apostles: “Lord teach us to pray.” I will then as a messenger of Jesus Christ explain to you, what is required that your prayer be a true and perfect prayer.

I. THE OBJECT OF OUR PRAYER OUGHT TO BE PLEASING TO GOD.

1. What is it that most men pray for? It is some transient, temporal good:—success in worldly undertakings, protection from impending calamities, delivery from sickness, and the like. Or do you pray in the first place for spiritual benefits, as remission of sins, checking the violence of your passions; for Christian virtues, as humility, chastity, etc?

2. Another defect of our prayer is, that we sometimes obstinately ask for a certain object, being under the illusion that we cannot be happy without it. We would fain draw the design of the edifice of our life, leaving to our Lord and Maker nothing but the task of carrying out the conceptions of our own mind.

3. The object of our prayer cannot be acceptable in the eyes of God, unless we long for him and his kingdom first. The Lord's Prayer is a model to us. “Our Father, who art in

heaven." Heavenward should the eye of the supplicant be directed. "Hallowed be thy name." The glory of God and his holy name should be as a first prayer on our lips. "Thy kingdom come," etc. The seaman does not ask in the first place for a pleasant voyage, but for reaching the harbor in safety. So we may repeat the words of our Saviour: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. vi, 33. We are, however, allowed to ask for earthly things also, but with submission to God's holy will. Leave him the choice. "We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." Rom. viii, 26.

II. THE OTHER CONDITION OF A TRUE AND PERFECT PRAYER IS ENTIRE CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1. Confidence and hope are founded on *faith*, which is their blossom. Jesus required faith and confidence of everyone who wanted to have a petition granted. To this confidence he promised all things. "Amen, I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain: Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believeth that whatsoever he saith shall be done; it shall be done unto him. Therefore I say with you, all things whatsoever you ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive; and they shall come unto you." Mk. xi, 23-24. "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this mulberry tree: Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou transplanted into the sea, and it should obey you." Lk. xvii, 6.

2. Our confidence is founded on divine *omnipotence*, *wisdom* and *bounty* shining as three bright stars into earthly light. Our confidence is founded on divine promises, on the precious blood of Jesus Christ, on an experience of more than a thousand years, and on the experience of our own life.

3. Or should we waver in our confidence, because the Lord does not always grant what we ask him for within a certain space of time? "What is soon granted, loses its value," says St. Au-

gustine. God knows, if the granting of our petitions is wholesome to us. "For which thing I thrice besought the Lord, that it might depart from me. And he said to me: My grace is sufficient for thee: for power is made perfect in infirmity." Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," cried Bartimeus, the blind man; and his petition was not granted, till he cried out several times. The virgins dressed in their mystical garments had to wait till midnight, before the bridegroom came; whilst the foolish virgins, having fallen asleep, were not found worthy of his celestial love.

"You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord; and you have appointed him a day, according to your pleasure;" said Judith reproachingly to the inhabitants of Bethulia, who would deliver their city into the hands of the besiegers, if no help would come from the Lord within five days. Let us not appoint for the Lord a time for his mercy. Let us put our future in his hands with unconditional confidence!

III. EVERY PRAYER OF OUR HEART MUST BE UTTERED WITH PURE LIPS.

Impurity of the soul would change our confidence into presumption. Consequently the sinner cannot expect to have his prayers granted.

1. *Holy Scripture* inculcates the doctrine in many places. "When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes from you; and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear you; for your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes; cease to do perversely, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow. And then come, and accuse me, saith the Lord." Isai. i, 15-18. "Behold, the hand of the Lord is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have divided between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he should not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity. Your lips

have spoken lies, and your tongue uttereth iniquity." Is. lix, 1-3. And St. John writes: "Dearly beloved, if our heart do not reprehend us, we have confidence towards God. And whatsoever we shall ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." I John iii, 21.

2. *Reason* teaches us the same doctrine. The sinner is a rebel against God. What earthly king will look propitiously upon a rebel who, whilst he is in the state of rebellion, asks for new favors? Sin is more than a rebellion, it is an attempt to destroy the redemption of Jesus Christ, and an actual destruction of its fruits, by preventing their being applied to the soul. And should the Father hear the prayers of him who thus treats his only Son? Verily, in consequence of mortal sin there is fixed a great chaos between the sinner and God, which cannot be overbridged except by penance.

3. Our Lord gave *unlimited promises* to our prayers, because we pray in the name of his Son, as members of his body. It is the Spirit of his Son who cries for help in us. "Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father." Gal. iv, 6. Thus we are branches of the Vine Jesus Christ, for which reason the eyes of the Holy Father rest on us with complacency, and the words of the Saviour are fulfilled in us: "If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you." John xvi, 23. Whereas the sinner is a dry branch, having lost his connection with the Vine, wherefore his prayer is no more efficacious than the prayer of man before redemption of the Jew and Gentile.

Whosoever of you has defiled his soul, let him restore the vital union with Jesus Christ. Let him pray with fervor in the words of the divine Son, "Forgive us our trespasses," let him cry to heaven in the words of the Holy Church, "From all sin, deliver us, O Lord. From thy wrath deliver us, O Lord."

IV. OUR PRAYER IS MOST EFFICACIOUS, IF IT BE ACCOMPANIED WITH GOOD WORKS.

1. "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay

up treasures of gold. For alms delivereth from death; and the same is that which purgeth away and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." Tob. xii, 8, 9. Thus spoke the Angel of heaven to Tobias, when offering his thanks. To Cornelius "who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always," the angel said: "Thy prayers and thy alms have ascended for a memorial in the sight of God." Act. x, 2, 4.

The more you give God, the more he will give you. At the same time you loosen the fetters wherewith your heart is tied to the earth, the great obstacle of familiar intercourse and tender union with God.

Peroration: If you comply with the above conditions, your prayer will be heard, especially if you offer it up to God in this house of God, on holy ground, before the Blessed Sacrament, or during the tremendous sacrifice of Mass. And as the gift of prayer is acquired by continual exercise, let us not cease praying.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

DUTY AND ADVANTAGES OF PRAYER.

Jesus could not have exhorted us to pray in a more touching manner, than he did in this day's Gospel. He promises to grant our petitions, if we pray in his name, and confiding in his merits. "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Mt. vii, 7, 8. May all of us follow this exhortation!

PART I.

IT IS OUR DUTY TO PRAY.

- I. God wills that we should pray. This we are taught by
1. *Holy Scripture* of both the Old and New Testament,

which exhorts us again and again to pray. "Trust in him all ye congregation of people: pour out your hearts before him: God is our helper for ever." Ps. lxi, 9. "Cry to me, and I will hear thee." Jerem. xxxiii, 3. "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always." Eccles. xviii, 22. "And he spoke also a parable to them, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint." Lk. xviii, 1. The words, "we ought," imply, according to St. Thomas and St. Alphonsus of Liguori, a strict precept. Philip. iv, 5, 6. I Thess. v, 17; Col. iv, 2.

2. By the *Saints* and *Holy Fathers*, who, not only by words, but more by their example, call upon us to pray: their whole life was, so to say, a continual prayer.

3. *By our relation to God*. Whatever we are, we are by God; on him we depend. We must acknowledge this our dependency; which is done by prayer.

4. *By our obligation to edify* our fellow-men. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Mt. v, 16. For this object prayer is an indispensable means.

5. By all the *sacraments*, ceremonies, and institutions, of the Church, which call to mind our duty to pray.

II. Prayer is necessary:

1. For the promotion of our *temporal* welfare. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" I Cor. iv, 7.

2. To reach our *eternal* destiny. Without prayer we cannot

a. Overcome temptation. "Watch ye and pray, that you may not fall into temptation." *b.* Obtain forgiveness of sin: to make an act of contrition is prayer itself, and is not possible without previous prayer. *c.* Persevere in virtue. "Without me you can do nothing."

PART II.

ADVANTAGES OF PRAYER.

The power and efficacy of prayer is very great.

A. It is founded

I. On the infinite love and bounty of God, whose heart is moved by our prayer to grant his helpless children the graces so much needed. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." Ps. xlix, 15. "Who hath called upon him, and he despised him?" Eccles. ii, 12.

II. On the promise made by Jesus Christ. "If you remain in me, and my words remain in you; you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done to you." John xv, 7.

B. It is manifested in various ways. Its advantages are seen

I. In regard to our temporal welfare.

1. It gives consolation and help in tribulations. It is in consequence of prayer that the young men were protected against the flames of the furnace, Dan. iii, 25, 25, that Jonas was delivered out of the belly of the fish, John ii, 2, Susan, from death, Dan. xiii, 52. How many sick were healed by Jesus in consequence of their prayer!

2. It draws down God's blessing.

II. In regard to our eternal salvation.

1. Reminding us of temptation, and strengthening us against it. "Watch ye, and pray, that you enter not into temptation." Mt. xxvi, 41. Especially subduing concupiscence and driving away the evil spirits. 'There is nothing so much hated by the devil as prayer. "The roaring of the lion does not frighten away the wild beasts as much as the prayer of the just the devil.' St. Chrysostom.

2. Causing forgiveness of sins.

By what was the Publican in the temple justified? Lk. xviii. By what was the father induced to give such a hearty reception to the prodigal son? Lk. xv.

3. Releasing the punishment due for sins

a. Here on earth. "He that loveth God shall obtain pardon for his sins by prayer, and shall refrain himself from them, and shall be heard in the prayer of days." Eccles. iii, 4.

b. After death. "It is therefore a holy and wholesome

thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." II Mach. xii, 46; The Holy Church prays for the departed souls without ceasing.

4. Drawing God's grace from heaven. "Ask, and you shall receive." Mt. vii, 7. The Holy Father appropriately calls prayer a mysterious struggle with God, prefigured by Jacob's struggle, the result of which is the pouring down of divine graces into our heart; and the key by which the entrance to the divine source of graces is opened.

5. Being an indispensable means of salvation. "Pray for one another, that you may be saved." James v, 16.

Peroration: It is our duty to pray. If it is so wholesome for body and soul, if it is absolutely necessary for our salvation, we should follow the exhortation of St. Paul: "Pray without ceasing." I Thess. v, 17.

Wiser.

Lenten Sermons
On the Seven Words Upon the Cross.

BY STRINGER.

I.
THE FIRST WORD.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
 Lk. xxiii, 34.

“Hear ye him” (Mt. xvii, 5), said a voice out of the cloud at the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. “One is your Master, Christ,” declared Jesus of himself. (Mt. xxiii, 10). As our master and teacher he still addressed salutary words to our hearts from the Cross. The first of his words upon the Cross was: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This instructive word of our Saviour contains:

I. A PETITION.

1. To whom did Jesus address this petition? To his, *Heavenly Father*. This is an example for us:

a. Do we act in a like manner? As a general rule, God is the last, being whose help we implore, and, then, not before we have sought it from men in vain.

b. Only in the Holy Ghost can we call God our Father. “You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: “Abba (Father).” Rom. iv, 6. “Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: “Abba, Father.” Gal. iv, 6. We have God for our Father, inasmuch as we have the Holy Ghost in our hearts. The Holy Ghost abiding in our hearts manifests his presence by holy deeds. “For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God (to perform good works), they are the sons of God.” Rom. viii, 14. “But the fruit of the Spirit (the works to the performing of which he leads) is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, continency, chastity.” Gal. v, 22. Is this

fruit of the Holy Ghost in our hearts? If not, are we children of God?

2. For what did Jesus pray? To obtain *forgiveness for his enemies*. Let us meditate

a. On the *incomprehensible charity* of Jesus toward his enemies. He prays in the extremity of suffering, for the salvation of those who are intent only on increasing his sufferings. He prays, before the mouths of the blasphemers are silenced, and before he addresses his Blessed Mother and his beloved disciple in their grief. His word is a word of reconciliation.

b. On *our duty to follow* his example. All men, especially those "who will live piously in Christ Jesus" (I Tim iii, 12) have their enemies. Respecting them we received the precept of Jesus Christ: "Love you enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." Mt. v, 44.

According to this rule we are obliged to forsake all hatred and indignation, and to wish our enemies good from our hearts; to manifest by our actions this sentiment of benevolence, and to pray for our enemies. Have you, therefore, acted towards your enemies in this manner?

c. On the *severity* with which the love of our enemies has been inculcated on us. Call to mind the parable of the unmerciful servant, with the concluding sentence: "So also shall my Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." Mt. xviii, 35.

d. On the grand *promise* connected with fulfillment of this command. "That you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven, who maketh his sun rise upon the good and upon the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." Mt. v, 45.

e. On the great *meritoriousness* of loving our enemies. It is a work of penance, and self-denial, more generous and meritorious than the severest discipline and fasting.

3. *For whom did Jesus pray?*

For his enemies and tormentors.

a. For all those who assisted in crucifying him and for

those who calumniated and blasphemed him. He hastened to be their intercessor to hinder the punishment due for such a wicked deed.

b. For us, also, who by our sins crucify again the Son of God, and make a mockery of him. Heb. vi, 6. Let us repent of our sins as being the cause of his crucifixion; let us implore his intercession with the Father.

II. AN EXCUSE.

“They know not what they do.”

Why does Jesus add these words to his petition?

1. To inspire us with a great *confidence* in his mercy.

a. Jesus on the Cross excuses the sinner before his Heavenly Father. How great a consolation in the depressing remembrance of our past sins! “Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus who died, yea, who rose also again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Rom. viii, 34. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just.” I John ii, 1.

b. Let us always remember the charity of Jesus to us poor sinners. He does not remind his Heavenly Father of our wickedness, but makes excuses for our frailty and ignorance. Let us thank him for his exuberant charity. Far be it from us to excuse ourselves before God! Let us implore Jesus to do it for us.

2. To set a good *example*.

a. Behold the meekness and patience of Jesus, who at least excuses what he cannot deny.

b. Let us resolve to follow him in this regard, for which purpose the following considerations may serve:

First: Few are those Christians who follow Jesus in this regard, excusing those who have trespassed against them. How have you borne offences heretofore? You make a great deal of talk about them, and are too ready to charge your neighbor with malignity. Repent of this weakness.

Second: Such conduct is a proof of your imperfection and sinfulness. “Charity thinketh no evil.” I Cor xiii, 5. A heart so prone to think evil must be void of charity.

Third: It is generous and salutary to excuse to ourselves all offences inflicted on us. "With what judgment you have judged, you shall be judged; and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again." Mt. vii, 2.

Peroration: Let us earnestly ponder on the first word upon the Cross. It makes known to us the charity of Christ, which surpasseth knowledge (Eph. iii, 19) that charity which "many waters cannot quench; neither can the floods drown it." Cant. viii, 7. It inculcates on our minds the love of our enemies: "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." Mt. v, 44. Our crucified Master was not like those "who have sat in the chair of Moses, and say, and do not," Mt. xxiii, 2, 3; but "he hath prayed for the transgressor." Is. liii, 12. The efficacy of this prayer is apparent by conversion of many of the by-standers, by the centurion confessing: "Indeed this man was the Son of God," (Mk. xv, 39); by the multitude striking their breasts (Lk. xxiii, 48), and by three thousand souls being added on the day of Pentecost (Apoc. ii, 41). Verily, our High-Priest "in the days of his flesh, offering up prayers and supplications, with a strong cry and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence." Heb. v, 7.

II.

SECOND WORD UPON THE CROSS.

"Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Lk. xxiii, 43. "He was reputed with the wicked," said the evangelist of the Old Testament; (Is. liii, 12), and Mark the Evangelist (xv, 28), when mentioning that they crucified two thieves with him, refers expressly to the fulfillment of the above prophecy. Whilst one of them reviled the Saviour, the other, repenting of his crimes, addressed Jesus, whom he acknowledged to be the Messiah, in the following words: "Lord, remember me, when thou shalt come into thy

kingdom;" whereupon the Saviour of all men opened his mouth saying: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Lk. xxiii, 43. What a consoling promise, worthy indeed of being the object of our meditation!

I. WHAT WAS PROMISED IN THESE WORDS?

1. *The kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus promises the thief to take him into paradise, i. e., to grant him the vision of God.

To all of us the same promise was then made, if we not only say, Lord, Lord, but if we do the will of the Father who is in heaven (Mt. vii, 21); for this is the will of God, your sanctification. "We are not to partake of great rewards but by great efforts." St. Gregory. From this it is evident that (a) we must comply with the condition; sanctifying ourselves by avoiding sin and the proximate occasions of sin, and by performing good works, particularly by fulfilling the duties of our state of life. How have you complied with this condition heretofore? How will you comply with it for the future? (b) We must not allow this our hope of heaven to degenerate into presumption. Baptism alone will not save you, nor the recitation of certain prayers, nor a so-called honest life not contaminated with public crimes; but, seriously intent upon our sanctification, "we must work our salvation with fear and trembling." Philip ii, 12.

2. *The companionship of Jesus.*

"Thou shalt be *with me* in paradise." He promises the thief not only heaven, but the most intimate union with himself: As thou art now with me on the cross, so thou shalt be with me this day in my own joy. All of us are destined for the same divine union. "Where I am, there also shall my ministers be." John xii, 26. "In my Father's house there are many mansions. * * I go to prepare a place for you. And if I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself; that where I am, you also may be." John xiv, 2. Reflect:

a. How exceedingly glorious and consoling is this our destiny! To be with Jesus, in the enjoyment of his tender affections and friendship, to partake of his glory; to behold Jesus in his incomprehensible beauty; to know him, and to be known by him. Thanks, adoration, and praise, be to him!

b. The condition of this future union. To be with Jesus in our temporal life, to concentrate our thoughts on him, to keep his commandments, to imitate his example, to devote ourselves entirely to him. Have we complied with this condition in our past life? Contrition. Implore his grace, that by being here with him, you may be found worthy of being with him hereafter.

3. *This kingdom and companionship of Jesus will come to us very soon.*

"This day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

We all have to appear before Jesus our Judge, if not this day, at least so soon that it seems to be this day. This consideration may inculcate on our mind three rules full of wisdom:—

a. *Flee all sins without delay*, and defer not your penance. "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day." Eccles. v, 8. For how many years have you been buried in the mire of sin? "To day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Ps. xciv, 8.

b. *Bear all afflictions with patience.* "For our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17. *This day* the thief entered from the torments of the cross into the joys of paradise. Oh! that we were ashamed of our pusillanimity!

c. *Make conscientious use of your time.* "The night cometh, when no man can work." John ix, 4. And how have you employed your time? How many days of your life without fruit, without a good work for heaven! How many days and years spent in sin! Let us amend our lives!

II. WHO GAVE THIS PROMISE?

Jesus on the Cross, when being reviled and blasphemed. Hence you become more convinced:—

1. *Of his infinite love towards sinners.*

He does not think of his own unspeakable sufferings, when the salvation of one penitent sinner is at stake. We, on the contrary, shun small efforts and inconveniencies, when our neighbor is in distress. Let us make at once the firm resolution to assist our fellow-man in his needs.

2. *Of his divine omnipotence.*

a. A thief becomes so great a penitent that Jesus promises him that "this day" he shall be with him in paradise. "This is the change of the right hand of the Most High." Ps. lxxvi, 11. Let us take our refuge in Jesus.

b. This omnipotence is manifested when he appears in his deepest debasement. Nailed upon the cross and being at the brink of death, he shows his divine power by the conversion of this sinner. How great is the virtue of the cross! Let us embrace it with faithful confidence, that we also may experience its virtue.

III. TO WHOM THIS PROMISE WAS MADE.

1. *Truly, to a great sinner.*

a. No one need despair of divine grace and mercy. God is the father who sees the returning son, when he is yet a great way off, and embraces him. Lk. xv, 20. He is the good shepherd who goes after the lost sheep, and lays it upon his shoulders, rejoicing. v, 4. It is he who "desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live" (Ezech. xxxiii, 11); who says: "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son. that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not his son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him." John iii, 16.

b. Do we entertain a great confidence in the Lord? Or do we think with Cain: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon?" Gen. iv, 13. Or are we to despair with Judas? Trust in Jesus. One drop of his precious blood would have been sufficient to take away the sins of the whole world; and now he has poured out all his blood.

2. *But to a sincere penitent also.*

a. He was deeply grieved over his sins, which he publicly confesses: "We receive the due reward of our deeds." Lk. xxiii, 41. He puts his confidence in Jesus whom he addresses without delay as his Lord. He suffers the rest of his time with the patience and resignation of a penitent.

b. Such is the efficacy of penance based on our confidence in Jesus. The thief obtains remission of all sins and of all punishment due for them, and even the joys and happiness of paradise. Let us also do penance, and turn our mind from evil to good.

Peroration: "Only remember me, when it shall be well with thee," said Joseph to the chief butler, "and do me this kindness, to put Pharaoh in mind to take me out of this prison." Gen. xl, 14. "But the chief butler, when things prospered with him, forgot his interpreter." v, 23. Not so Jesus, who made and kept a consoling promise to a malefactor, a great sinner, and sincere penitent, and so encouraged our hope and confidence. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that hope in his mercy." Ps. cxlvi, 11.

III.

THIRD WORD UPON THE CROSS.

"Behold thy son! Behold thy mother!"

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother." etc. John xix, 25. The greater the love of a soul to Jesus, the more nigh she is to his cross. Accordingly his Blessed Mother stood the nearest to the Cross, her heroic soul not fearing offences and insults,—the leader of souls loving God: John, Magdalene, etc. "When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing, whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman, behold thy son! After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother!" John xix, 26. This is the third word of Jesus upon the Cross, the last will and testament of our dying Saviour. Let this third word upon the cross be the subject of our meditation.

PART I.

THE WORDS ADDRESSED TO MARY.

“Woman, behold thy son!”—

I. Consider first the inner sentiment expressed by these words:

1. A sentiment of compassion for his Mother, who stood by the Cross, the grief of her heart being great as the sea. “To what shall I compare thee, or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? For great as the sea is thy desolation.” Lam. ii, 13.

a. Like Jesus we should come to the assistance of the suffering. Or have we no consoling word for the afflicted, no soothing word for the dejected? If you have been wanting in this regard, repent of your hard-heartedness, and make firm resolutions for the future.

b. How good and salutary is compassion for our neighbor’s grief! It is one of the principal virtues. Its reward is heaven. Call to mind the sentence at the Last Judgment.

2. A sentiment of filial love and gratitude.

a. His grateful heart could not forget what she had been to him for thirty-three years, what she had suffered for his sake: Joseph’s uneasiness; the journey into Bethlehem; the disdain in the city of David; the flight into Egypt; the three days’ searching, etc.

b. With filial solicitude he confides her to his disciple whom he loves, being of all the most qualified to replace him, and to make the grief for her exceedingly great loss more bearable.

c. Your conduct toward your parents, ye children, should be similar. Acknowledge what they are to you. Rejoice their hearts. Support and console them in sickness, in old age, on their death bed. Have you no reason to reproach yourselves in this regard?

II. Consider the meaning of these words.

1. “Woman,” not “mother,” that by this sweet name he may not increase her grief.

So tender is true love, as to cause no unnecessary pain. How many occasions have been offered to us to appease our neighbor's wrath, to soothe his afflictions! And we have made no use of them.

2. "Behold thy son!"

a. Jesus whom she had carried in her womb with indescribable delight, who, when a bright boy, had been smiling at her with the sweet smile of a child; who, being the best of sons, had rejoiced his mother's heart; now suffering unspeakable agony on the Cross.

b. John henceforth her son instead of Jesus; the son of the poor fisherman instead of the son of God; the disciple instead of the Master; a subject instead of the King; a servant instead of the Lord; a feeble man instead of the Almighty.

c. If God deprived you of what was the dearest to your heart, did you resign yourself to the adorable will of God? Perhaps your heart was distracted from God. Jacob the Patriarch was separated from his son Joseph, because he loved him above all his sons, and more than he ought to have done in justice to his other children.

PART II.

THE WORDS OF JESUS ADDRESSED TO JOHN.

"Behold thy mother!" These words contain:

I. *A sweet consolation:*

1. *For St. John.* The more he loved his divine Master, the deeper was his grief at his loss. Jesus seeing his great sorrow, says to him: "Behold thy mother!" i. e., I know the torments of love in thy heart. Thou art in need of consolation after my departure. So let my mother be thy mother; she will console and encourage thee.

2. *For all pious Christians.* The word addressed to John is addressed to them also. He represented to them his own mother as their mother. When you are forsaken by men, depressed in consequence of great sufferings, when you are attacked by the enemy of mankind, when you struggle with death; raise

up your eyes to Mary, your mother, who protects you and intercedes for you. Put a son's confidence in her, and commit yourself to her maternal care. When St. Therese, at the age of twelve years, was bereft of her mother, she implored in burning tears the Blessed Virgin to be henceforth her mother and protectress. And St. Therese experienced the special protection of the Blessed Virgin in all her needs.

II. A great commandment.

1. St. John was by the words of Jesus obliged to regard Mary as his mother, to treat her as such, to obey and love her. He fulfilled the will of his Master, conscientiously, for "from that hour the disciple took her to his own." John xix, 27.

2. We are under the same obligation to regard Mary as our mother, to honor, love, and follow her. Have we been conscientious in complying with this demand of our Saviour? Let us repent of our carelessness in her service; let us make the firm resolution to perform a good work in her honor every day; as to recite the rosary, the Litany, or her office, etc.

Peroration: Such is the last will and testament of our dying Saviour. Resigned to the divine will, his Virgin Mother accepted it as the handmaid of the Lord, unto whom it should be done according to his word. The disciple kept sacred his master's will. Let us also regard Mary with reverence; let us trust in her protection in life and death.

IV.

FOURTH WORD UPON THE CROSS.

● "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mt. xxvii, 46. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour," (Mt. xxvii, 45,) an extraordinary darkness, not caused by the course of nature, by which God intended to manifest his indignation at the wicked deed, by which the sun of justice was darkened, and by which, at the same time, Jesus was to be glorified, the sun in the heavens bewailing his death, and communicating its mourning to all nature.

Let us, in the shadow of this mysterious darkness, meditate on Jesus being forsaken of his Father, when about the ninth hour he cried with a loud voice, saying: "Eli, Eli, lamma sabaethani?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mt. xxvii, 46. If we enquire after the causes which occasioned this great sadness in the soul of Jesus, they are the following:

I. HIS INEFFABLE BODILY PAINS WITHOUT ANY RELIEF.

1. His head crowned with thorns. He cannot lean it against the Cross, without increasing its pains.

2. His wounds on his hands and feet expand more and more. His wounds are his only support.

3. His body is bruised, and fatigued. "Despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity. We have thought him, as it were, a leper." Is. liii, 3, 4.

4. His exclamation. My God, my God! etc., is not so much a lamentation, as a prayer and necessary utterance of his excruciating pains, by which he intended to manifest his being true man capable of suffering. Besides, he called the attention to Psalm xxi, wherein the passion of the Messiah is described, the beginning of which he recites: "O God, my God! look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me?" Let us also pray, when we are visited with sufferings and afflictions. "Is any one of you sad? Let him pray." James v, 13.

II. THE ABSENCE OF CONSOLATION IN HIS SOUL.

Jesus wanted to be "tempted in all things, like as we are," (Heb. iv, 15). "For in that, wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted, he is able to succour those also who are tempted." ii, 18. Therefore he was willing to be bereft of all consolation. Consider:

1. *The greatness of this suffering.* On earth he sees no one to speak comfort to him. No angel descends from heaven to console and strengthen him.

2. *The end to be obtained.*

a. It is an atonement for our unfaithfulness to God:

In general for all mankind. "They are all gone aside, they

are become unprofitable together : there is none that doeth good, no not one." Ps. xiii, 3. "They turned away, and kept not the covenant." Ps. lxxvii, 57. "These men have not known my ways : so I swore in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest." Ps. xciv, 11.

In *particular* for your unfaithfulness. How many times have you promised to serve God only, and yet you turned your affections to the creature again ; to serve him only, and yet you offend him again. How often have you sworn to shun the familiar occasions of sin, and yet have returned to them ? Thank Jesus for his atonement ; repent and amend.

b. It is a model for us when we are in a similar condition. This kind of suffering is the prerogative of pious souls. In this state were St. Francis of Assisi during the three years proceeding his death, St. Catharine of Siena, St. Francis of Sales, St. Therese and many others. In this state, the soul finds no consolation, no delight in prayer and devout exercises ; she thinks herself forsaken of God.

In this state of mind we should follow Jesus, who (1) investigated into the course of it : " Why hast thou forsaken me ?" It is either a gracious trial for the purpose of granting us more abundant graces ; or a deserved punishment for our unfaithfulness. (2) Bear this state with patience. Jesus says not : My Father, but my God, to express clearly his resignation to the will of God. Let us not become despondent ; let us not give up our devout exercises. This resignation is acquired by prayer.

III. HIS BEING FORSAKEN BY HIS DISCIPLES.

1. By his Cross Jesus would draw all things to himself. John xii, 32. This desire was not completely fulfilled.

a. The by-standers are obdurate, or mock and blaspheme. His own disciples stand afar off.

b. In all future times he sees the same continually repeated. He foresees thousands and millions apostates from his doctrine, innumerable Christians not living up to their faith ; entire nations hostile to the Gospel.

c. Have we not been also the cause of the sad disconsolate state of our Saviour on the Cross? We have sinned grievously and repeatedly, have refused to drink the cup of sorrow, have been so tardy in performing good actions, listening to the revilings of the world, the enemy of Jesus Christ. Let us repent of our ingratitude from the depth of our hearts!

Peroration: We all are to experience a similar state of despondency, to that experienced by Jesus who was forsaken by God and men. This anguish will befall us at the hour of death. Let us lift our eyes to Jesus who by his forsakenness on the Cross has diminished the terrors of death. Oh! let us cling to Jesus in good days, that he may not forsake us in the evil day. Let us often cry out to him: "When my strength shall fail, do not thou forsake me." Ps. lxx, 8. And whenever we pray to the mother of sorrows who stood by the Cross, being a witness of her Son's anguish, let us pray with devotion and ardor: "Pray for us now, and at the hour of our death, Amen."

V.

FIFTH WORD UPON THE CROSS.

"I thirst." John xix, 28.

The fifth word upon the Cross is another manifestation of the ineffable pains of Jesus. "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to his mouth." John xix, 28, 29. The fifth word upon the Cross admits of a literal, and of a mystical sense.

PART I.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

1. The *excruciating pain* of his thirst.

a. Thirst in general is in itself a very excruciating pain, producing more tormenting effects upon body and mind than

even hunger. It is still more vehement when produced in consequence of woundings, or in the last hours of the death struggle, when it is increased in consequence of internal fever.

b. For special reasons the thirst of the Saviour must have been infinitely great, and more painful than it ever could be in the experience of man. Remember his passion and loss of blood on the mount of Olivet, at the flagellation, coronation with a crown of thorns, at the carrying of the cross, during the three hours of unutterable torments on the Cross; his anguish of soul, etc. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws; and thou hast brought me down into the dust of death." Ps. xxi, 16.

c. Let us have compassion on the Saviour in his burning thirst, and reflect on the anguish of the Mother of sorrows who, at the lamentation of her Son, suffered incomparably more than Hagar, who could not see her child dying with thirst.

2. The *motives* inducing our Saviour to suffer this thirst:

a. That the *Scripture* might be fulfilled. All prophecies were fulfilled but one: "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Ps. lxxviii, 22. How unlike are we to him! He is so anxious to fulfill the will of his Heavenly Father, and we are so tardy in complying with our most important duties.

b. That he might atone for our sins of *palate*. Men sin in many ways by eating and drinking. The greatest sinners among them are the drunkards, "they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink off their cups." Prov. xxiii, 30. The time will come, when in hell they will long for one drop of water, but in vain.

3. The wording itself teaches us in what manner we should make our sufferings *known* to others:

a. He discovers his burning thirst at the last moment. He has compassion on others, before he provides for himself.

b. He does not use many words, nor does he lament, whilst we relate our sufferings with minuteness and exaggeration.

PART II.

THE MYSTICAL SENSE.

Greater still was the spiritual thirst of Jesus. He was more

anxious to have it stilled, than to have his mouth moistened. To what was the desire of the thirsting Saviour directed?

1. *To fulfill the will of his Heavenly Father.* What was his food in his lifetime is changed into thirst on the Cross; as if he would say: "I long to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his works." John iv, 34.

a. How great was his virtue of *obedience*! His whole life from the first moment of becoming man to the last, when he gave up the ghost, was an uninterrupted, perfect, sacrifice of obedience, in order to redeem us poor children of Adam from the sin and punishment of disobedience. Rom. v, 19; Philip. ii, 8, 9. For the sake of obedience he even did the will of his tormentors. Lk. ii, 21. Isa. I, 5, 6.

b. Our hearts should be actuated with a similar readiness to execute the will of God. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled." Mt. v, 6. But how little inclined are men, especially young people, to subject themselves to proper authority.

2. *To suffer for us.*

By sufferings our Lord sought what was lost; hence his thirst for more pains, that all men might partake of everlasting joys.

a. This manifests the abundance of his *charity* towards us. One drop of his blood, one tear of his divine eyes, one prayer from his lips, would have been sufficient to redeem the whole world, nay thousands of worlds. Yet he is willing to drink more bitterness, if it contributes to our salvation.

b. We should have a similar desire, we whose inheritance, is suffering. If the Lord desires affliction, why not his servants? If the innocent, why not the guilty? The Christian heroes and heroines were very desirous of suffering, as St. Francis of Assisium, St. Pius V, St. Therese, St. Magdalene de Pazzis, etc.

3. *To save all men.*

He came into the world, that all might be saved; and from his Cross he would draw all things to himself. Now the time had arrived, when all mankind were to be drawn to the Crucified.

a. The *sinner*, that he may be converted, and live. The Saviour on the Cross cries out: I thirst for thy tears of penance, O impenitent sinner! For thy fear of God, O frivolous sinner! For thy modesty, O shameless sinner! For thy humility, O proud sinner! etc.

b. The *just* that they may be justified the more. He thirsted for their increase in virtue, for their perfection and zeal in performing good works. He thirsted for the obedience of good children, the solicitude of parents, the peace of families, etc.

c. *All human hearts*, that, thirsting after truth and salvation, they may come to him and drink out of the fountain of living waters (John vii, 37), that by faith and charity they may belong to him who "also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an obligation and a sacrifice to God, for an odor of sweetness." Eph. v, 2; and that they may say in truth: "As the heart panteth after the fountains of waters: so my soul panteth after thee, O God." Ps. xli, 2.

Where is our zeal of penance and virtue? Where are our works for the honor of Jesus, for our salvation and the salvation of our neighbor? "One pants after silver and gold, another after a rich inheritance, a third after honors, and scarcely one is found who can say: My soul panteth after thee, O Lord! They pant, but not after God." St. Augustine.

Peroration: Let us implore the Mother of Sorrows in consideration of her grief at seeing "vinegar offered to her Son's mouth" (John xix, 29) to obtain for us the gift of tears, so that we may shed tears of penance for our sins, and tears of gratitude and love for our Saviour; and so by quenching his thirst, we may on the Day of Judgment hear the consoling sentence: "I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink."

VI.

SIXTH WORD UPON THE CROSS.

"It is consummated." John xix, 30.

"When Jesus, therefore, had taken the vinegar, he said: "It is consummated," a very important and instructive word out of the mouth of our dying Saviour.

PART I.

WHAT JESUS HAS CONSUMMATED.

I. The *Scripture*.

1. In its *prophecies* concerning him, particularly his sufferings:

a. His seizure, and the flight of the disciples. "Christ the Lord is taken in our sins." Lam. iv, 20. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." Zach. xiii, 7.

b. The betrayal by Judas. "Even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, hath greatly supplanted me." Ps. xl, 10. "And they weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver." Zach. xi, 12.

c. His flagellation, derision, and crucifixion. "We have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed." Isai liii, 4. "I am a worm, and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. All that saw me have laughed me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. * * They have dug my hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones. * * * They parted my garments amongst them; and upon my vesture they cast lots." Ps xxi, 7.

2. In its *types* of the Messiah:

Isaac carrying on his shoulders the wood for the sacrifice. Gen. xxii, 6.

Joseph being sold by his brethren. xxxvii, 28.

The Brazen Serpent in the desert. Numb. xxi, 8.

The Paschal Lamb. Exod. xii, 5.

All is consummated:

II. His *vocation* of being the good shepherd.

1. He procured for his flock the best pasture by his doctrine, example, and grace, by his precious blood and the institution of his Church.

2. Let us learn from him to be faithful in performing the duties of our vocation, so that at the end of our lives we may say also:—It is consummated. Reflect:

a. On our stern *obligation* of fulfilling the duties of our state of life, as it is set forth in the parable on the talents." Mt. xxv, 14.

b. On the *solicitude* required. We should fulfill our duties perfectly (not indifferently or inadvertently) and for the promotion of God's glory.

c. On the *reward*: Peace of heart, God's complacency, heavenly glory. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Mt. xxv, 21. Oh that we might have cause to say at the close of each day: It is consummated! Contrition. Good resolutions.

III. His life.

1. Now was the moment when Jesus was to give his life for our salvation, after he had fulfilled the Scripture and the task of his life.

2. The hour will, sooner or later, come for us also, when "it is consummated," when life is over.

a. The *sinner* will pronounce this word in great anguish, at the sight of his many sins and vices. "It is consummated!"—a life destitute of virtue, of sincere conversion, full of vanity and sins. The transient joys, perishable riches, and vain honors, are past. The time for salvation is past; the measure of sins is full to the brim; an everlasting life commences—in hell. Have we no reason to fear the fate of the sinner? Let us do penance without delay. Let us implore God for his grace and assistance.

b. The *sincere* Christian will pronounce it in sacred joy and with a cheerful heart. "It is consummated"—a life of grace well employed, a holy life, acceptable in the sight of God. The afflictions, sufferings, and severities of penance are over. The combat against world, flesh, and devil is fought. Revilings and calumnies are no more. The life of an innocent or penitent soul is consummated. "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is

laid up for me the crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me at that day." II Tim. iv, 7. Have we any claim to this consolation? Let us decide at once for a short penance, for the narrow road. Let us pray for divine grace, especially for the grace of perseverance.

PART II.

HOW MUCH JESUS HAD TO SUFFER, BEFORE HE COULD SAY: "IT IS CONSUMMATED."

I. His *entire life* was an uninterrupted suffering.

1. In his earliest *childhood*, suffering was the share of his inheritance. The stable at Bethlehem. The persecution by Herod. The flight into Egypt.

2. His *hidden life* at Nazareth was a life of poverty, want, and hard work.

3. His *public life* was full of hardships, perils, and persecutions.

4. At the evening of his life his sufferings were completed on the mount of Olivet, up to Calvary, till he could say at last: "It is consummated!"

II. Therefrom we draw the following conclusions:

a. Afflictions and sufferings are necessary for man, as sequels of sin. "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life." Gen. iii, 17.

b. As tests of our virtue. "As gold in the furnace he hath proved them; and as a victim of a holocaust he hath received them." Wisd. iii, 6. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial." Rom. v, 3. Joseph's virtue was tested and proved in Egypt, and in the prison; Tobias' virtue is tested by blindness.

c. As an indispensable condition for the kingdom of God. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" Lk. xxiv, 26. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." Act. xiv, 21. "Abraham said to Dives in hell: "Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life time, but now thou art tor-

mented." Lk. xvi, 25. Let us, therefore, when we are afflicted, praise Divine Providence.

III. Sufferings and afflictions are profitable.

a. They afford us an opportunity of protesting our confidence in Divine Providence. The greater the storm, the deeper does the tree take root. The firmness of faith shone the brightest in the martyrs and confessors.

b. They detach our hearts from earthly things. Our heart is more or less alienated from God by terrestrial things. "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." Mt. vi, 21. Afflictions are the cutting-knife in the hand of the heavenly physician.

c. They are a suitable means of mortification. Man is not inclined to mortify himself, and when he mortifies himself, he is often partly led by self-love.

III. We profit by sufferings and afflictions, if we

a. Accept them in faith, by being convinced that Divine Providence has sent them: "A hair of your head shall not perish." Lk. xxi, 18. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job. i, 21. "Blessed are they that mourn." Mt. v, 5.

b. Bear them with patience. "In your patience you shall possess your souls." Lk. xvi, 19. "Patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. x, 36. Make good resolutions.

Peroration: "It is consummated!" a sweet word after an innocent or penitent life. Oh! that we might be able to repeat the word at the hour of our death! To obtain this grace, let us, during this short space of our time, persevere in patience and firmness.

VII.

SEVENTH WORD UPON THE CROSS.

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

One act was yet to be performed, which was the most painful to our Saviour, the most profitable to us, and the most ar-

dently desired by the world. The Great Lord, of whose greatness there is no end (Ps. cxliv, 3), "crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Lk. xxiii, Let us meditate on the following circumstances:

I. "He cried with a loud voice," to intimate

1. That he gave his life willfully.

a. At the approach of death the human voice fails. Jesus cries with a loud voice as a proof how right he was in saying: "No man taketh away my life from me; but I lay it down of myself; and I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again." John x, 18.

b. Infinite was the charity of Jesus, inducing him to give himself voluntarily to death, to take away the sting of death. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv, 13. And we have repaid him with ingratitude, by loving sin, though he died to deliver us from the death of sin. Let us repent of the past, and amend for the future!

2. That he was subject to the natural agony caused by the separation of body and soul.

a. Every soul is in great anguish at the separation from her body. Jesus was to make known to us that he went through the same struggle, wherefore he said with a loud voice.

b. With Jesus the agony was the greater, because his body had been the most faithful companion to him for thirty-three years, and because his Godhead was united with his body as well as with his soul. O dearest Jesus, vouchsafe, we pray, through thine agony to mitigate our anguish at the hour of our death!

II. Meaning of this word.

1. He addressed his Heavenly Father, to teach us:

a. That he has been sent into this world, to give testimony to the truth, in confirmation of which mission his last word is an address to God, his Father.

b. That in all our tribulations we should find consolation in the thought of God being our Father. God knows what I suffer; he takes care of me. Have you acted according to this truth heretofore?

2. Jesus recommended his *spirit*, the noblest part of his humanity, reminding us of our obligation to provide in life and death for the welfare of our soul. "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mt. xvi, 26. It is a lamentable fact that we neglect the salvation of our soul amidst the cares of life. Jesus inculcates on our mind that we can do nothing better than recommend ourselves and all that belongs to us into the hands of our Heavenly Father. "Thou openest thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature." Ps. cxliv, 16. "Behold, the hand of the Lord is not shortened, that it cannot save." Isa. lix, 1. "No man can snatch them (whom the Father hath given me) out of the hand of my Father." John x, 29. Let us then often recommend ourselves into the hands of God, especially at the close of each day. Let us belong to him alone. "I am thine, save thou me." Ps. cxviii, 94

III. This last word must be applied to us also.

1. We should recommend ourselves every day into the hands of God, by performing good works. "Therefore also they, who suffer according to the will of God, let them commend their souls in good deeds to the faithful Creator." I Pet. iv, 19. By wicked deeds we deliver our soul into the hands of Satan. "Who-soever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." John viii, 34. To whom have you given preference in your past life, to God or Satan? Contrition; amendment.

2. At the hour of death, the same word should proceed from our lips. We cannot, however, repeat it with confidence at that dreadful hour, unless our lives were lives of penance. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lk. xiii, 5. As to this penitent spirit let me remark:

a. It must come from the Holy Ghost. Penance is not a work of our nature; on the contrary the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life protest against penance. The penitential spirit, as every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights (James i, 17), and Jesus himself was led by the spirit into the desert. Mt. iv, 1.

b. This repentance of the Christian is manifested by pious exercises, (a) zeal of prayer, to which penitent souls devote much time. (b) Love of silence, contrite Christians preferring to converse with God. (c.) Patience in the daily hardships of life. (d) Voluntary works of penance.

Such penitent souls will be allowed to say with the dying Saviour: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Do you see the above indications of penance in your own life? If not, commence a penitent life without further delay, and implore divine grace.

Peroration: When Jesus had said this word, bowing his head, he gave up the Ghost. This Son of Justice, who is a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way, whose going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof, (Ps. xviii, 6) had set in the most painful death. In the words of David his ancestor, Jesus could say after the finishing of his sufferings: "In peace in the self-same I will sleep, and I will rest." Ps. iv, 9. How painful must have been the sentiments of the Virgin, the Mother of God, when her divine Son bowing his head, gave up the Ghost; the sentiments of her who desired to die with him, and in his stead! Oh! that she would protect my soul in death, "lest my enemy say: I have prevailed against him." Ps. xix, 5.

Ascension Day.

III.

THE ASCENSION IS TO JESUS, THE GREATEST GLORY, TO US, THE GREATEST BLESSING.

“And the Lord Jesus * * was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.” Mk. xvi, 19. The observance of this anniversary impresses on our mind, the glorious truth that heaven is opened to us, since Jesus, with his Saints, has gone there to prepare us mansions. Let us, then, in the first place, meditate on the glorious ascension of our Lord surrounded by the just souls of the Old Covenant, in order that our desire for heaven may become more inflamed; and in the second place, let us meditate on the blessings accruing to us from the ascension of Jesus, that we may be mindful of the duty imposed upon every one of us of doing what is necessary to procure for ourselves a participation in these blessings.

PART I.

THE GLORY OF THE ASCENSION.

1. At his entrance into the world, the holy angels beheld the Incarnate Son of God in the raiment and form of a servant; having neither royal attendance, nor even a human dwelling to be born in. To-day they adore him in the garments and majesty of the Heavenly King; in the society of the holy souls ascending into heaven—the souls of the Patriarchs and Prophets, and of all those whom he had delivered from Limbo. If we could have witnessed, like the holy angels, this victorious army in battle array, we should have been enraptured with triumphant joy. When Henry, King of Castile, was to meet the King of France, the noblemen attending him were so magnificently apparelled, so richly were their garments decked with gold and jewels, that the French were inclined to take every one of them, as he stepped on shore, to be the King. Yet, what is the most gorgeous retinue of the mightiest earthly king, compared with that of the King

of Heaven? The number of holy souls who accompanied Jesus into heaven may have exceeded the present number of men on earth, and were all clad in celestial splendor.

These holy souls, when approaching the gates of heaven, invited the holy angels, the princes of the heavenly kingdom, to rejoice in the triumphant entry of the Lord, saying in the words of the royal Prophet: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up O eternal gates; and the King of Glory shall enter in!" Ps. xxiii, 7. And who can describe the delight of the angelic host at the aspect of the Visitor? "When David returned, after he slew the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing to meet King Saul, with timbrels of joy, and cornets. And the women sung as they played; and they said: Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands!" I Kings xviii, 6, 7. Shortly before, David had been seen in the modest apparel of a shepherd's boy, despised by Goliath, and contemptuously spoken of by the people. The Son of David, clad in the poor apparel of mortal flesh, had shortly before been despised, persecuted, and crucified, by his own people; and now, surrounded by the innumerable hosts of holy angels, who praise his very death as the greatest work of God, he enters heaven triumphantly.

2. A greater glory than the praises and hymns of holy angels was prepared for the human nature of our Saviour. When Jesus proceeded to the throne of the Heavenly Father, saying, "I have manifested thy name," and pointing to the scourge, the thorns, and the cross, the words of the Psalmist were fulfilled: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand." Ps. cix, 1. Thus the humanity of Jesus was elevated to the throne of God.

Pharao "made Joseph go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should bow their knee before him, and that they should know he was made governor over the whole land of Egypt." Gen. xli, 43. The Heavenly King, on this day, made Jesus go up, not into the second chariot, but upon his own throne: "Sit thou at my right hand." He was not made gov-

ernor of an earthly realm, but sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, to be adored by all the princes of Paradise, by the kings of the world, and by all men; he was declared and recognized as "the King of kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, and inhabiteth light inaccessible" (I Tim. vi, 15), so that at his name all knees must bow.

How exuberant must have been the joy of those holy souls accompanying their Jesus! Pharaoh said to Joseph: "The land of Egypt is before thee: make thy brethren dwell in the best place, and give them the land of Gessen." Gen. xlvii. Those holy souls were put by Jesus, their brother, in possession of a heavenly kingdom, so that in them he fulfilled the promise made before his glorious ascension: "I appoint to you, as my Father has appointed to me, a kingdom." Lk. xxii, 29.

PART II.

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD IS OUR BLESSING.

1. We are encouraged and strengthened by the promise of our first-born brother: "I go to prepare a place for you * * * that where I am you also may be." John xiv, 2, 3. The Apostles were, by the Lord's ascension, so much strengthened, that the tribulations and persecutions foretold by him were to them the cause of joy. And indeed, good and evil days pass quickly by, but the glory which is to be conferred on us if we are neither elated with pride in the days of prosperity, nor discouraged in the gloomy days of affliction, will last for ever. "Seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth." Col. iii, 1, 2. And for what reason? "For our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." Cor. iv, 16. Jesus, our brother, went before us into a better land, where he is waiting for us. How great should be our desire for this happy land! The Jews in their captivity in Babylon lamented their exile from Sion, and longed incessantly to be there once more. "Upon the rivers of Babylon there we sat and

wept, when we remembered Sion." Admonished to cheer up their hearts by singing the songs of Sion, they answered: "How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land?" Ps. cxxxvi. Oh! let us walk the path which Jesus trod before us. "Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps." I Pet. ii, 21. As if to inculcate this important doctrine, he left his foot-prints on the rock from which he ascended into heaven. "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." John xiii, 15.

2. If you earnestly desire heaven, you must leave the road of sin, and walk, after Jesus, the path of virtue. "You must know," says St. Augustine, "that with Christ neither pride, nor impurity, nor avarice ascended: with our Physician no disease will ascend." It will be a great tribulation for you, who are given to pride, to avarice, to impurity, etc., to stifle your passion. Yet, if you seek for a flowery path to heaven, you will never find it; for there is none. The Ancient in the Apocalypse who showed St. John the millions of Saints in heaven, told him that they all had come there on a path of tribulation: "These are they who are come out of great tribulation." Apoc. vii, 14. Godfrey the Crusader refused to wear the royal crown, as king of Jerusalem: for it is not becoming, he said, that I should wear a golden crown where Jesus Christ was crowned with thorns. I wish from my heart that every one of you may have the same sentiments. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." II Tim. ii, 12.

Peroration: St. Anthony relates that Jesus in a vision presented to St. Catharine of Siena two crowns, the one of gold, the other of thorns, leaving her to choose which of them she would take; adding however, that if she chose the golden crown for this life, she would have to wear the crown of thorns in the next. "O my Saviour!" the Saint answered, "am I to see thee crowned with thorns on earth, and I myself to wear a crown of gold? It shall never be!" Whereupon she pressed the crown of thorns upon her head. Such was the sentiment of the Saints! If you

desire to be crowned in heaven you must wear the crown of thorns on earth. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

J. E. Campadelli.

IV.

THE WAY LEADING TO HEAVEN.

As is the Day of Resurrection, so also is the Day of Ascension; a day of great joy to all Christians. For, what could be more joyful to us than the good tidings: "The Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven?" Mk. xvi, 19; and, "where he is, there we shall be also." ? But how are we to arrive there? An important question, to which I will give you the answer. In order to do this, I will point out to you the way leading to heaven, and warn you of the obstacles in the way; and, finally, show you the end of this way.

I. THE WAY LEADING TO HEAVEN.

The way by which we must go, is:

1. *Faith*:

a. Faith is *necessary* for salvation.

"He that believeth not, shall be condemned." Mk. xvi, 16.

"He that believeth not, is already judged." John iii, 18.

"The law was our pedagogue in Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Gal. iii, 24. Cf. Trid. vi, cap. 8.

b This our faith must be *firm* and *lively*. "Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." James ii, 17. "They confess that they know God, but in their deeds they deny him." Titus. i, 16. "He only has true faith who by his conduct does not contradict what he confesses in words." St. Gregory.

2. *Baptism*.

a. Baptism of *water*; or baptism properly so called.

It is truly a way leading to heaven. At the baptismal font that is repeated which was once witnessed at the river Jordan: Heaven is opened over the new Christian, and he is proclaimed a child of God.

“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” Mk. xvi, 16. “Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.” John iii, 5.

Nevertheless it will not lead you to heaven, unless you perform the duties imposed on you by baptism. For by breaking your vows you certainly cannot gain heaven. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh.” Rom. viii, 1.

b. Baptism of *penance*. It is the only saving plank for those who have lost the grace of the first baptism. “Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.” Lk. xiii, 5.

II. OBSTACLES IN THE WAY.

There are various obstacles in our way to Christ, which we must overcome :

1. Obstacles resulting from *frailty*.

a. On *all* of us is imposed the duty not only of providing for our own salvation, but also for the salvation of our fellow-men. “Each one not considering the things, that are his own, but those that are other men’s.” Philip. ii, 4. Sinners are more to be pitied than those afflicted with any other disease ; and we should, so to say, lay hands upon them, that they may be saved. This may be effected by admonitions and a good example. II Thess. iii, 15.

b. This duty of the healthy to the sick is incumbent upon all, in every relation of life—upon the husband to his wife, and *vice versa* ; upon parents to their children ; upon superiors to their subjects. “If any man have not care of his own, but especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” I Tim. v, 8.

2. Obstacles resulting from *malignity*.

a. *Infernal* malignity. Satan attacks us like a robber and murderer ; him we must resist, and in the name of Jesus expel devils. “In this life we are on the way to our house. But the evil spirits as robbers beleaguer this way.” St. Gregory.

b. *Human* malignity, especially of the tongue and of bad example. "The tongue is, indeed, a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how small a fire kindleth a great wood. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is placed among our members, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell." James iii, 5, 6. In consequence "he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." I Pet. iii, 10. As to bad example Origen makes the appropriate remark: "The evil spirits search instruments, through which to accomplish their designs." These instruments are the wicked, who, by their bad example, corrupt good morals. Therefore "beware of false prophets, who came to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." Mt. vii, 15.

3. Obstacles resulting from general *corruption*:

a. *Our own nature* is corrupted, in consequence of concupiscence. A perilous obstacle indeed. "Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; but sin when it is completed, begetteth death." James i, 14. "He that is a slave of his concupiscence, is easily proved to be subject to all evils." St. Gregory. Let us then be cautious. "Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will. If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies." Eccles. xviii, 30. "Do not give thy consent to the allurements of thy concupiscence; it cannot conceive but by thee." St. Augustine.

b. The *world at large* is corrupted. "The whole world is seated in wickedness." I John v, 19. How many are the scandals, seductions, etc. ! Yet it is in our power to render the poison innoxious.

III. THE END OF THIS WAY.

1. We shall be taken up from this earth. Who would not rejoice in seeing approach (*a*) the end of sufferings. "God shall

wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor shall sorrow be any more; for the former things are passed away." Apoc. xxi, 4. (b) The end of our struggle against sin.

2. We shall be taken up *into heaven*. "You are they who have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint to you, as my Father hath appointed to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and may sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Lk. xxii, 28, 29, 30.

3. We shall enjoy *eternal rest*. Christ "sitteth on the right hand of God."

a. He *sitteth, i. e.*, he rests. Also "we who have believed, shall enter into rest." Heb. iv, 3.

b. He *sitteth on the right hand* of God. We also shall sit on the right hand, if now, listening to the voice of the Good Shepherd, we walk the path to heaven.

Well then, let us take the way to heaven, and courageously overcome the obstacles, in hope of the delightful end.

Menne.

Sixth Sunday After Easter.

III.

INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

“When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.” John xv, 26. In the same discourse, containing the above words, Jesus had addressed to his disciples the following words: “I will ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever.” John xiv, 16. We, in common with the holy Fathers, perceive, in these words, the promise made to the Church, that she should be preserved from all error by the special guidance of the Holy Ghost. By this great prerogative, the Church has been constituted the light-house on the ocean of life, by whose guidance all those who love light more than darkness, and truth more than falsehood, escape the diverse cliffs and shoals of error. I will explain this prerogative of infallibility possessed by the Church, by calling your attention to these three points of doctrine:

- I. Infallibility of the Church is necessary. -
2. Christ conferred on her this prerogative.
3. The Church has always claimed infallibility.

I.

The Church, having authority from Jesus Christ to teach all nations what they must believe, and what they must do for the salvation of their souls, is preserved from all error regarding faith and morals, which great prerogative we call the infallibility of the Church. The prerogative of infallibility is clearly deduced from the end for which the Church has been instituted.

1. From the beginning of Christianity there have been great struggles for the possession of truth. In our own days we have been witnesses of the struggle and excitement of human passion, caused by the doctrine of papal infallibility. Every

century has passed through similar struggles, some of which were so vehement that the tempests that have been excited in our present time are as nothing in comparison with them. Think not that similar contests will not occur again. So long as the chair of truth rests on this sinful earth, hell and its allies will attempt to undermine it, and to overthrow truth, by falsehood.

When the Christian mind is agitated and disturbed by religious contests, when one says, "Here is Christ!" and another, "There is Christ!" is it possible that there should be no authority on earth to decide peremptorily the question, to separate truth from error? If the Church has been instituted for the preservation of divine revelation through all centuries, must she not be endowed with the prerogative of declaring infallibly, on which side is truth, on which side error! If not, truth would be destroyed from off the face of the earth. Either an infallible Church, or no Church at all. Or, is Holy Scripture to decide religious disputes? An infallible book needs an infallible interpreter, as the history of Protestantism too clearly demonstrates.

2. Moreover, the divine attribute of justice requires that the Church should be infallible. You are all aware of our stern duty to obey the voice of our Holy Church. "If he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." Mt. xviii, 17. Can the Church be entitled to demand our assent to her doctrine, unless she gives us security that she will not lead us astray? For the same reason, the God of truth conferred the prerogative of infallibility on those through whom he spoke to his people, during the time when they addressed the people in his name, as the patriarchs and prophets.

II.

That which, for the fulfillment of her end, reason postulates for the Church, Jesus Christ has conferred on her, as Holy Scripture clearly teaches.

1. When our Saviour sent forth his Apostles to teach all nations, he gave them plenary powers. "As the Father hath

sent me, I also send you." John xx, 21. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." Mt. xxviii, 18-20. The Apostles and their successors are, by these words, commissioned to teach all nations to the consummation of the world. And that they may be teachers of truth, as such commission required, he promises to preserve them from error by his presence and assistance to the end of time.

2. Not contenting himself with his own protection, he gave her besides the Holy Ghost to preserve her from all error. "And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. When he, the spirit of truth, shall come, he will teach you all truth." John xiv, 16; xvi, 13. Where the Holy Ghost—the spirit of truth—abides, there is all light. And this light is to shine in the Church to the consummation of the world: "That he may abide with you *for ever*."

3. Our Lord made a third promise to the Church, when he said to Peter, whom he had constituted her visible head: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mt. xvi, 18. The most dangerous tempests that can rise against the Church are those which imperil the purity of faith, so that, if she should fall into an error, she would be subdued by the prince of hell, "the father of lies."

So we are taught by Jesus what the Apostle of the Gentiles expresses, saying, that the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth. I Tim. iii, 15.

III.

The Church has always been profoundly conscious of her infallibility.

Whenever she raised her voice to teach the faithful regarding faith or morals, she appealed to the assistance of the Holy

Ghost speaking through her, hereby following the example of the Apostles who, assembled in council at Jerusalem, required obedience to their decisions on the same ground: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things." Act. xv, 28. She has been at all times so profoundly conscious of her infallibility as to require of her children assent to her teachings under the penalty of exclusion from her community and from heaven. The assistance of the Holy Ghost, however, does not exclude human activity. The Church employs all natural means in the search after truth, by consulting history, tradition, and human intellect. But the Holy Ghost assists and leads the Church in her scrutiny, that she may not deviate from the path of truth.

What then are the organs through which we hear the voice of the Holy Ghost? These are the pastors of the Church, who received the mission to feed the flock, and who exercise their ministry in divers ways.

1. First, by the daily teaching of the Church throughout Christendom. What is preached everywhere, is the teaching of the Holy Ghost. If it were not so, the Church would lead the faithful into error, which cannot be.

2. In a solemn manner by Ecumenical Councils, which must be convoked and presided over by the Successor of St. Peter.

3. In a less solemn manner, by a declaration of the Pope, to which the majority of bishops manifest their consent. Such was the case with regard to the proclamation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

4. By declarations of the Pope, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, not in his capacity as a private teacher, but only in his official capacity, when he judges of faith and morals as Head of the Church. For Peter is the rock of the Church, on whose faith the faith of the flock depends. To him it was said: "Feed my Lambs. Feed my sheep." To him it was said: "Confirm thy brethren." Lk. xxii, 32.

Peroration: Let us thank God for the prerogative of infallibility conferred on the Church. To her let us cling in the night of darkness and ignorance, saying with St. Peter: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." John v, 69. Our faith in the Church's infallibility is based on the consent of the best men of all ages, and strengthened by the blood of millions who gave their life for this faith. It is based on the testimony of our intellect, which bears witness to the admirable harmony existing between the various doctrines of the Church. But above all, it is founded on the truth of God who imparted to his Church this grand prerogative of exemption from error. Let us then rejoice in obedience to her doctrines, and in the observance of her precepts.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

TEMPORAL AFFLICTIONS VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF FAITH.

The Apostles were not exempt from the general lot of Christians of being bearers of the cross. To-day they heard the word: "They will put you out of the synagogues." John xvi, 2. "You shall lament and weep." John xvi, 20. * * This prophecy was literally fulfilled. The lives of the Apostles resembled a perpetual crucifixion. * * Our own lives are, in their degree, similar. This life is a life of tears, and every mortal, though he be a Saint, must drink of the cup of bitterness. "Great labor is created for all men, and a heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam, from the day of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial into the mother of all." Eccles. xl, 1. But are not these afflictions a discord in God's wonderful creation? By no means, as you will acknowledge if you reflect on what faith teaches us:

- I. On the origin,
- II. On the end,
- III. On the reward, of afflictions.

PART I.

On the origin of afflictions faith teaches :

I. God did not make them.

On the contrary, God created

1. Nature perfectly harmonious.

“And God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good.” Gen. i, 31. No sweeping floods, no storms desolated nature. * * Like lambs were all the animals subject to man. * * The most delicious fruits grew without cultivation. * *

2. Man was perfectly happy.

a. His body was not subject to fatigues or pains.

b. His soul enjoyed the sweetest peace.—

“While man in Paradise willed what God commanded him, he had food to eat, and the Tree of Life, that age might not dissolve him. No disease was to be feared. The best health of the body, the deepest rest of the soul.” St. Augustine.

II. Man himself caused them.

First sin, Gen. iii. In consequence of this sin

1. Nature was set in an uproar.

“Cursed is the earth.” Gen. iii, 17. This curse caused the spirit of rebellion in all nature. Sterility of the soil. Devastations of the elements. Voracious animals.

2. Miseries were brought upon mankind.

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth.” Gen. iii, 19. * * * Like a sweeping torrent, miseries and tribulation broke over mankind. Irksome labor, hunger, thirst, pains, sadness, diseases, death. * * * “We who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened.” II Cor. v, 4. “The present time is a time of battles and struggles, and therefore of wounds, blood and pains.” St. Chrysostom.

PART II.

On the *end* of temporal evils faith teaches that, in God's hands, they are

I. A scourge to punish sin.

1. God strikes the sinner.

"Many are the scourges of the sinner." Ps. xxx, 10. "God does not spare the guilty, for he will not leave the guilty unpunished." St. Gregory. Examples: Our first parents, David, Manasse, Israel, the man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years. * * * God still punishes the sinner even in this life.

2. By scourging him God intends his correction.

God is the Eternal Mercy, and though he lifts his arm to chastise the sinner, he intends to soften and move to penance the indocile heart. He often obtains this end. "Their infirmities were multiplied: afterwards they made haste." Ps. xv, 4. Examples: The people of Israel, the Prodigal Son. * * * Similar things occur before our eyes. How often do you witness the conversion of a sinner, in consequence of tribulation coming upon him!

II. A cup of bitterness to awake those who are lukewarm.

Lukewarmness is a great obstacle in the way of salvation. "Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." Apoc. iii, 16. In order to awaken lukewarm souls God sometimes gives them the cup of bitterness to drink, in consequence of which they rise from their slumber, and go forward on their path to heaven. Examples from the lives of the Saints. * * * "The scourge of God exhorts the lazy Christian and constrains him to zeal, though he wills not." St. Augustine.

III. A flame of fire to cleanse the soul of the just.

"As gold in the furnace he hath proved them; and as a victim of a holocaust, he hath received them." Wisd. iii, 6. "Most dearest, think not strange the burning heat which is to try you, as if some new thing happened to you." I Pet. iv, 12. "Tribulation is to thee the furnace of a silversmith." St. Augustine.

1. God intends to cleanse the just from their faults.

"I will clean purge away the dross, and I will take away all thy tin. * * * After this thou shalt be called the city of the just, a faithful city. Isai i, 25, 26.

2. To lead them to perfection.

"All who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." II Tim. iii; 12. "When the Lord sends us great tribulations, it is a sign that he has great intentions concerning us, and wants us to become great Saints." St. Ignatius Loyola. Therefore we behold all the great Saints of God on the way of the cross.

PART III.

As to the reward for temporal evils, faith teaches us that our sufferings, if borne with patience,

I. Will surely be rewarded.

"You shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John xvi, 20. "Blessed are you when men shall revile you." Mt. v, 11. "Now no chastisement for the present seemeth to bring with it joy, but sorrow. But afterwards it will yield to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceful fruit of justice." Heb. xii, 11. Moreover, faith teaches us that

II. Our rewards for sufferings endured will be exceedingly great.

"I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii, 18. "Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." II Cor. iv, 17. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." II Tim. ii, 12. "Crown of life." James i, 12. Therefore it is that St. Bernardin calls suffering the gate of heaven.

Peroration: Now, then, complain no longer, if you have to force your way through thorns. * * God wills what is best for you. Frustrate not his benign intentions! Cf. Imit. Christ. Lib. ii, ch. 12.

Joseph Schuen.

Whitsunday.

III.

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

“The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.” John xiv, 26. Jesus Christ is come to found on earth a kingdom of blessing and grace, the Holy Church. A child of his passion and blood, she was destined to apply to the poor human family the fruits of Redemption, and to be the lighthouse in the darkness of the world. We are now celebrating the day of her foundation, or her birthday. For, on this day the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, and the first among them, St. Peter, delivered his first sermon, which produced an effect so marvellous that three thousand were converted. Thus doth the Church make her first appearance in sight of the world. Let us devote our present meditation to this birthday of the Catholic Church. I say, it is a day memorable for its miraculous signs and for its consequences.

PART I.

THE MIRACULOUS SIGNS.

The Catholic Church is the most magnificent institution ever established by the hand of God on earth. It is consequently to be expected that the day of its foundation should have been conspicuous by important and significant signs. Holy Scripture mentions :

1. *The storm.*

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as if of a mighty wind coming.” Act. ii, 2. When God gave his commandments on mount Sinai, “thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount.” Exodus xix, 16. At the foundation of the Church a mighty storm was heard. Who sees not here a figure of those storms

which at all times will rage against the pillars of the Church, without shaking them?

2. *The fiery tongues.*

"And there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire." Act. ii, 3. In flames of fire the Old Law was given. "And all mount Sinai was on a smoke, because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose on it as out of a furnace; and all the mount was terrible." Exodus xix, 18. The Church was to be founded in fire also. Celestial fire, the fire of the Holy Ghost, was poured down upon the Apostles, to inflame them with the fire of divine charity, which was to be ever burning in the Catholic Church through all ages on her altars, and in the hearts of sincere Christians.

3. *The gift of languages.*

"They began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak." Act. ii, 4. By this new miracle, it is intimated that the Church was to spread among divers nations, to become the whole world's Church, i. e., the Catholic Church.

4. *The crowding together of the multitude.*

"Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And when this voice was made, the multitude came together." Act. ii, 5. How great a commotion in the streets of Jerusalem! How the people hasten towards the Apostolic house! In all ages, Christians "of good will" flock in crowds to the church.

5. *The power of the Apostolic word.*

"Peter, standing up, with the eleven, lifted up his voice." Act. ii, 14. His Apostolic word produced marvellous effects. "Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their hearts; and they said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: What shall we do, men brethren? * * * There were added to them in that day about three thousand souls." Act. ii, 37, 41. The word of God has always been in the Catholic Church "as a fire, and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jerem. xxiii, 29), moving men to penance.

How great a consolation for us, that our Church from her very beginning bears the stamp of divinity on her forehead, that she is sealed with the Holy Ghost (Eph. i, 13), and “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone!” Eph. ii, 20. Thanks to God for this great benefit!

PART II.

THE EFFECTS PRODUCED.

1. *On earth.*

By the Church an incomprehensible and inexhaustible blessing was conferred on mankind. For, whatever is great, beautiful, and noble, among men, is more or less a work of the Church. She is truly the greatest benefactrix.

a. By fostering true wisdom.

The Church has received from her founder treasures of eternal wisdom, and his command imparts it to the nations. Elementary and high schools are her invention. She preaches the sublimest and the most practical doctrines to all men of all classes. What the greatest philosophers of old could not discover or imagine, we teach to little children. She promotes and sanctifies earthly wisdom also; she has ever been the protector of human sciences and arts.

b. By fostering good morals.

All doctrines and institutions of the Church serve to present to the Lord a saintly people. She has subdued to her gentle yoke the ferocity of savages, and has led the most perverse men out of the depths of vice to the height of heaven. How terrifying are the records of the corruption of morals, before the Church was established! Rom. i, 26, 32. But wherever she sets her foot, good morals and a virtuous life will spring up.

c. By being intent upon works of charity.

She established hospitals for the sick, asylums for the orphans; and the best of her daughters devote their lives to soothing the sufferings of mankind. The Church loves like a mother who does not forget any of her children.

2. *In heaven.*

Ever since the Church was established, heaven receives :

a. Everlasting *praise* by the holy sacrifice of Mass, and by the prayers of the faithful, both being offered continually.

b. An incessant *increase*. The Church is the gate of paradise, sending up to heaven holy souls every day.

Peroration: Let us rejoice in being members of the Church ; let us be her faithful children by a holy life, that she may open to us the gate of heaven.

Joseph Schuen.

IV.

GIFT OF GODLINESS OR PIETY.

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, * * the spirit of knowledge and of godliness.” Isai. xi, 2. It is not without reason that these two gifts—knowledge and godliness—are joined close together. The Holy Ghost, as the true sun of our spiritual life, enlightens our souls by the light of the sublimest truths, and at the same time warms them by his sacred fire, so as to enable them to produce fruit. In a heart thus enlightened and enkindled are, life in God, joy in God, longing for God, and a sacred desire to serve God and gain his complacency. In such a heart is true piety. Chosing this splendid gift of the Holy Ghost as the subject of our meditation, let me speak to you

I. ON THE PREJUDICES AGAINST PIETY.

“All who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” II Tim. iii, 12. So it is. The world has ever denied the value of piety, “blaspheming those things which it knows not” (II Pet. ii, 12), for “the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God ; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined.” I Cor. ii, 14. No, my brethren, the gift of piety imparted to us by the Holy Ghost, is far

1. *From being hypocrisy and false piety.* It is far

a. *From hypocrisy.* "Piety trains hypocrites who cover the corruption of their heart with the cloak of devotion," is the reproach of the world. We reply :

We are the first to brand this kind of men as impostors laden with the divine curse, whose eternal lot will be with the reprobate.

There are hypocritical simulators of every virtue, as humility, love of our neighbor, friendship, faithfulness. Is this a reason not to believe any longer in genuine virtue ?

b. *From false piety,* clinging to external works, yet disregarding the most important commandments of God and of the Church.

Would it not be much better to combat such abuses, than to ridicule piety itself ?

2. The gift of the Holy Ghost is, on the contrary, the best *remedy against hypocrisy and false piety.*

a. *Against hypocrisy.*

For the Holy Ghost is a spirit and teacher of truth. Therefore "the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful." Wisd. i, 5. Accordingly we observe in the truly pious Christian harmony between the outward and inward man. Moreover, the Holy Ghost condemns hypocrisy in explicit terms, in Holy Writ, which he inspired. He turned away from the chosen people, because with their lips they glorified him, but their heart was far from him. Isai. xxix, 13. Jesus rebukes the hypocrites as "whited sepulchres." Mt. xxiii, 27. The Apostle assigns a mark, by which the seducers in the last period of the world are distinguished, in the following words: "Having an appearance, indeed, of piety, but denying the power thereof." II Tim. iii, 5. Let us not confound the gift of the Holy Ghost with what is an abomination before the Lord, and is the work of Satan, who "transformeth himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers be transformed as the ministers of justice, whose end shall be according to their work." II Cor. xi, 14, 15.

b. *Against false piety.*

The Holy Ghost himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings, (Rom. viii, 26), and teaches us to adore the Father in spirit and in truth. John vi, 23. He admonishes us to follow in our devotion the Holy Church, our infallible guide.

II. ON THE NATURE OF PIETY.

True piety is the desire and endeavor to do God's holy will, and the ardent wish to live only for him and in him, and to be united with him.

1. This spirit of piety is manifested in the just men of the Old Covenant, the patriarchs and prophets, especially as an ardent longing for the promised Redeemer.

2. It is more manifested in *the pious souls of the New Covenant* :

a. In their exercises of devotion.

The church is to them truly the house of God. "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Better is one day in thy courts above thousands." Is not their heart burning within them, when they are given to private prayer, or when they attend public service, and preaching of the word of God?

The Ecclesiastical Year fills their hearts with sentiments of festal joy and ardent devotion, now of contrition and penance, now of gladness and praise.

The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, its adoration and reception perfect the joy of their hearts, because it is the most intimate union of a devout soul with the fountain of all happiness. "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20.

b. In the performance of the duties of this vocation.

The heavenly light and warmth of their hearts break forth, permeating their family, their lives, and their neighborhood; all their acquaintances being edified by their piety and godliness.

III. OF THE EFFECTS OF PIETY.

To be pious, and to be virtuous, are one and the same thing.

1. Piety is the *mother of all other virtues*, and renders them amiable before men.

a. Humility is manifested by piety, when offering sacrifices of thanks and praise to him to whom all honor and glory are due; or when, overwhelmed with the consciousness of poverty, imploring the Heavenly Father for forgiveness, light and strength.

b. The Angelic virtue of *purity* finds its strongest weapon in prayer, its securest protection in the wound of the Sacred Heart.

c. The virtues of Christian *charity and mercy* spring forth at the foot of our altars, and by tender devotion to Jesus they grow to heroism. Deprive our heroines of Christian charity, of the Blessed Sacrament, of prayer, of the spirit of piety, and the fountain of charity and of sacrifices will soon dry up within them. And in the world who are the great benefactors of the poor and suffering? Those who frequent our churches! To them "religion pure and unspotted with God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation." James i, 27. But the charity of the world toward the poor, how cold and even selfish!

d. Lastly, how could temperance, mortification of our senses, and passions, prosper without piety?

2. *By piety even the earthly task of man is sanctified.*

a. *By a good intention* all earthly pursuits are sanctified, so that we are enabled always to pray and not to faint (Lk. xviii, 1), and to pray at all times in the Spirit. Eph. vi, 18.

b. This explains why *every state of life* has its Saints. We venerate holy soldiers, statesmen, laborers, men of letters, artists, servants and slaves. The spirit of piety, far from estranging man from his vocation, encourages him in all his labors, and renders him more faithful in his stewardship, more conscientious in accomplishing the duties of his vocation. "Piety is profitable to all things, having promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come." I Tim. iv, 8.

Peroration: How precious a gift is then the gift of piety! How great its consolation, and the delight of devotion! Where piety is, there is life in God. "Exercise thyself to piety!" Tim. ix, 7.

Liebermann.

Trinity Sunday.

III.

TREBLE UNITY BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.

We adore the mystery of this day in profound silence : it is incomprehensible and ineffable. Yet this same divine mystery, although we are not able to speak of it worthily, affords us an opportunity, to speak of its image and likeness in man. God wills that we should strive toward resembling him in his unity. For this unity Jesus implored the Father on the eve of his Passion, "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." John xvii, 21. It is self-evident that we have no other way to strive for this unity with God, than by growing in Christian perfection : "Be you perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect." Mt. v, 48. How then is man one with God ?

I. WITH GOD THE FATHER BY CREATION.

God made man according to his image and likeness.

1. This image and likeness with God consists in his soul. For she is

a. A spirit like God ; immortal, and created for eternal union with God ; endowed with the three faculties of memory, understanding, and free will.

b. A spirit created to hold dominion over the visible world, as God is the Lord and Master of all created things.

c. In the process of reasoning, an image of the most blessed Trinity. "As God the Heavenly Father by knowing himself begets the Word, i. e., his divine Son, and their mutual love, the Holy Ghost, proceeds from all eternity, so man by his cognition begets within himself an inward word, his likeness, so to say, from which love springs forth in his will." St. Augustin.

2. We should carefully guard this likeness.

We have reason to complain with the Psalmist (xlviii, 13), "Man when he was in honor did not understand ; he is com-

pared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." But God will revenge this outrage inflicted on him. "If any man shall adore the beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine, in the cup of his wrath; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone." Apoc. xiv, 9.

II. WITH GOD THE SON BY HIS INCARNATION.

- 1. How stupendous was the charity of the Son of God in his incarnation!

An immense gap was opened up by original sin between God and man. The Son of God filled it up by his Incarnation. "God was made man, that man might be made God." St. Augustine. A stupendous mystery! History records that the Emperor Theodosius chose for his bride Athenais, daughter of a very poor father, elevating a servant girl to the rank of an empress. But it is unheard of that a king, in order to espouse a poor girl, laid down the royal crown and became poor for love of her. The Son of God is this king. By adopting our nature, he was espoused to mankind "for ever in mercy and in commiserations." Osee ii, 19.

- 2. Are we thankful for so great charity?

a. It requires of us faithfulness, gratitude, return of love. With profound humility said Abigail, when David offered to marry her: "Behold, let thy servant be a hand-maid, to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord." I Kings, xxv, 41. Yet David was not king at that time. Is it possible, then, that any service of the Son of God should be too arduous for us?

b. But how great is our ingratitude! We try to destroy the unity established by Christ between God and us. Christ is of humble and meek nature (Mt. xi, 29); we often display, rather, the nature of wild beasts. He was obedient unto death (Philip. ii, 8), and we are stubborn and refractory. He was patient, kind, and ready to forgive; we are impatient, void of charity, and unforgiving.

III. WITH GOD THE HOLY GHOST BY SANCTIFICATION.

1. A most intimate union between God and man is effected by the Holy Ghost.

a. We are elevated to the dignity of being children of God, and even of participating in some sense of the divine nature. Hence the supernatural love for God originates in consequence of which we are one spirit and mind with God. "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2, 20.

b. In consequence of this union, we participate in all his goods. Perfect union produces perfect community of goods, as is illustrated by the faithful at Jerusalem, who "had all things common." Act. ii, 44. And God who spared not even his Son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things? Rom. viii, 32. Therefore the prince of the Apostles writes, that Jesus Christ "has regenerated us into an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not, reserved in heaven for us." I Pet. i, 4.

2. This intimate union imposes on us the duty of sacrificing ourselves and all our possessions to God. He demands our love, our heart. "My son, give me thy heart;" and he demands the heart undivided (Mt. xxii, 37); for "He that is a friend loveth at all times." Prov. xvii, 17.

Peroration: As all other things, so our unity with the triune God is imparted to us by the Father through the Son in the Holy Ghost, "for of him, and by him, and in him, are all things; to him be glory for ever." Rom. xi, 36. Let us then strive to gain a tender devotion to the most blessed Trinity, especially by making frequently and devoutly the sign of the Cross, by saying the "Glory be to God" with attention, etc., and the charity of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost will perfect the union established between God and men.

Joseph Galliar.

IV.

WHAT THIS FEAST CALLS TO OUR MIND; WHAT IT DEMANDS, AND WHAT IT PROMISES.

Let me, on this day devoted to the special honor of the three divine Persons, lay before you three points of doctrine for reflection.

I. WHAT DOES THIS FEAST CALL TO OUR MIND?

1. The incomprehensible decree of the Heavenly Father to show mercy on mankind. "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!" Rom. xi, 33.

2. The infinite charity of the divine Son, who died for us on the Cross.

3. The immense riches of grace conferred on us by the Holy Ghost, as described I Cor. xii, 1.

II. WHAT DOES IT DEMAND OF US?

1. We should often meditate on the eternal degree of divine mercy, that it may be fulfilled in us.

2. We should render ourselves worthy of having the fruits of the death on the Cross applied to our immortal souls, by doing penance, and by incessantly striving for greater perfection.

3. We should make constant use of the riches of grace, which the Holy Ghost is anxious to impart to us, by incessant prayer, and regular reception of the holy sacraments, so that our co-operation with divine grace be made manifest by virtues and good works.

III. WHAT DOES IT PROMISE?

1. It promises that our Heavenly Father will adopt us into his family.

2. It promises that the Son of God will intercede for us with the Father. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just." I John ii, 1. Jesus is "always living to make intercession for us." Heb. vii, 25.

3. It promises that the Holy Ghost will always assist us as teacher, Paraclete, and guide to heaven, if only we place no obstacle in his way, and co-operate with his grace.

Haeglsperger.

Corpus Christi.

II.

HOLY EUCHARIST THE CHRISTIAN'S HERITAGE.

“Neither ought the children to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.” II Cor. xii, 14. Jesus Christ has with paternal love gathered treasures for us, his children, and stored them up for us in the great mystery of our altars. How great, then, is the heritage of a Christian! Jesus gave us in the most Blessed Sacrament all that he possesses:

I. ALL THAT HE RECEIVED FROM HIS FATHER FROM ETERNITY.

1. His *Godhead*. “I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” John xvi, 32. Jesus Christ communicates to us his Godhead, which he possessed with the Father from all eternity. “God, although almighty, could give no more.” St. Augustine.

2. His *glory*. Faith teaches us, that in the Blessed Sacrament, we receive Jesus Christ as he is in the kingdom of his Father. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” John xiii, 31. The bridegroom imparts to his bride all the advantages of his own nobility and glory; how could Jesus withhold anything from our soul, his spouse?

3. His *life*. “I am the bread of life.—As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me.—He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever.” John vi, 48, 58, 59. He in consequence communicates to us life, his life, immortal life.

II. ALL THAT HE RECEIVED IN TIME BY HIS INCARNATION.

1. His *body*. “Take ye and eat: This is my body.” Mt. xxvi, 26. “The bread which we break, is it not partaking of the body of the Lord?” I Cor. x, 16. “Is it a great thing to believe the Lord? He says, this is my body; who can doubt it?” St. Thomas of Villanova. “It cannot be denied that the Virgin has brought forth out of the order of nature. And this body which we consecrate, is the body taken from the Virgin.” St. Ambrose.

2. His *blood*. We receive not a dead body; consequently

we receive the blood with the living body. "Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins." Mt. xxvi, 27, 28. "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" I Cor. x, 16. The Church teaches that under the form of bread you receive, not only the body, but also the blood, of Christ. By disputing this decision you will err in faith.

3. His *soul*. A body deprived of the soul is dead, death being the separation of the soul from the body. Christ who died once, dies no more. Therefore, as with the body of Jesus, we receive his blood, so he imparts to us his soul also; consequently his entire human nature, all that he received in becoming man for us.

III. ALL THAT HE HAD ACQUIRED IN HIS LIFE AND BY HIS DEATH.

1. His *merits*. (a) The merits of his life. He adopted human nature for us, prayed, went about doing good. (b) The merits of his death. He gave his body and blood by his last will and testament. The heir, becoming one person with the testator, succeeds to all his rights. So the heir of the New Testament, receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ, succeeds to all the rights and merits of the dying Saviour.

2. His *grace*. "Holy Eucharist not only, in common with the other sacraments, indicates and confers sanctifying grace, but it surpasses them all by imparting the Author of grace himself." St. Bernard. "The charity of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." Rom. v, 5.

3. His *beatitude*. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life." John vi, 55. "By virtue of this mystery we are like eagles, who take their flight heavenward." St. Chrysostom.

Peroration: How great then is the heritage of a Christian! May we by meditating thereon be moved to thanksgiving, return of love, and adoration!

Menne.

Second Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

HOMILY.

Everyone shares the sentiments of the man in the Gospel who, sitting at table with Jesus, said: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Lk. xiv, 15. The morals of man, however, are often not in accordance with the above desire. The Gospel of this day being well adapted to dispel this negligence in conforming our daily life to our desire for heaven, I will give you a plain explanation of this celestial frstivity.

1. *Who is the host?* On the answer to this question readiness to accept the invitation mostly depends. The host is God himself, no doubt an urgent motive to come.

a. An infinitely *rich* Lord, the source of all that is good, and of all true joys." "Thine are the heavens, and thine is the earth." Ps. lxxxviii. 12. "What have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth?" Ps. lxxii, 25.

b. An infinitely *bountiful* Lord. His bounty urges him to make happy the creature created according to his image, by bestowing his benefits. "Rich to all that call upon him." Rom. x, 12. "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure." Ps. xxxv, 9.

c. An infinitely *wise* Lord, who knows exactly what is best for every one of his guests. Such considerations no doubt recommend the acceptance of the invitation.

2. *No less attractive is the great supper itself!*

Its parts are:

a. Divine *faith*, by which our knowledge is elevated above our nature.

b. The *commandments* of God, which, being in conformity with our nature, protect body and soul from countless evils.

c. The plenitude of *graces* conferred on the guests of Jesus by the Holy Sacraments, principally by the bread of angels.

d. Everlasting joys in heaven, after we have by faith and virtue rendered ourselves worthy to appear in the midst of those who are invited to the nuptials of the Lamb.

3. The *King himself tenders the invitation* to serve him and so to become happy, and for this end sends his servants, to-wit:

a. Jesus Christ, "taking the form of a servant, and in shape found as a man." Philip. ii, 7. By means of his incarnation, teaching, death, and the establishment of the Church, the great supper was prepared; all this being an invitation "to come, eat my bread, and drink the wine, which I have mingled for you." Prov. ix, 5. Is it possible for you to refuse to follow this messenger?

b. All who succeeded in the place of Jesus Christ—the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. "Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." I Cor. iv, 1. In like manner, with regard to certain individuals, parents, superiors, and christian friends, take the place of Jesus Christ.

c. Human conscience, which warns and urges us to live up to our faith and so to obtain heaven.

The invitations being so many, it is not through the fault of the King, if any one should fail to come. But who are those who refuse to come?

4. Those *first invited* are

a. The Jews, who had the law and divine revelation, were prepared by the prophets for the great supper in the kingdom of the Messiah, and were the first to whom Christ and his apostles were sent.

b. We, Christians, who, born in the true church, have been nourished from infancy with the milk of Christian truth and grace.

5. *What are the excuses* for not coming, or rather the causes of turning a deaf ear to the divine invitation?

a. Inordinate searching after earthly possessions. "I have bought a farm."

b. The over-great cares of life, under the burden of which

the soul cannot meditate on spiritual things. They are like him who had bought five yoke of oxen.

c. Degrading sensuality. "I have married a wife." The slaves of the flesh find no taste in spiritual things.

6. Then the master of the house *became angry*.

a. It is in itself a great offence to refuse the invitation of so kind a master, after he has made such extensive preparations.

b. The offence becomes an outrage by the excuses made. Earthly things, a farm, five yoke of oxen, a woman, obtain the preference to the King of kings.

7. The *punishment* is proportionate to the outrage. "I say unto you that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper." He who does not co-operate with grace, is to lose it; indifference as to faith has infidelity for its consequence; levity as to the observance of the commandments often causes obduracy. "Who is wise, and will keep these things, and will understand the mercies of the Lord?" Ps. cvi, 43. He who is wise, is on his guard against the deceptions of Satan, of which the Gospel mentions the following two:

8. Those *first invited* never partake of the supper. Every one living in sin, and yet hoping for heaven on the sole ground of his being a Christian, should reflect on the above truth.

a. Merely being a member of the Church, will not save you. If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." John viii, 39.

b. On the contrary the condemnation of the Christian will be the more painful, if he shall not have lived up to his faith.

9. The *house of the King*—heaven—will be filled anyhow.

a. The poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame, will be admitted, i. e., the common people who by comparison with the learned and wealthy seem neglected; and public sinners, who seemed to be despised and cast away on account of their sins, but obtained the grace of conversion.

b. Those in the highways and hedges will also be admitted;

that is, those who lived accordingly to the dictates of their conscience, although they did not know the full truth.

If you will partake of the great supper in heaven, accept the many invitations of God's servants.

J. Nausea.

IV.

THE SANCTUARY LAMP.

"A certain man made a great supper and invited many." Lk. xiv, 16. The Church in reading the Gospel on the great supper within the octave of Corpus Christi, evidently understands by the "great supper" Holy Eucharist. Jesus Christ has invited all Christians to partake of this great supper which has lasted for nearly two thousand years. Before the supper table a lamp is burning day and night, the sanctuary lamp. We can trace this pious practice as far back as to the fourth century. In later times the Church made it a peremptory regulation to have a lamp continually burning before the tabernacle. All regulations of the Church are a proof of her wisdom. The Sanctuary Lamp is very significant also, its light being a symbol of Jesus' love towards us, and of our love towards Jesus.

PART I.

Jesus is charity. Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, announce his infinite love towards us. "The charity of Christ surpasseth knowledge." Eph. iii, 19. A wonderful proof thereof is the most blessed sacrament of the altar. "In no sacrament does divine charity appear more stupendous than in the mystery of the altar." St. Bonaventure. This charity is symbolized by the light burning before the tabernacle.

1. *Its flame is tending heavenward.*

Behold the purest charity of the Lord, unmixed with earthly imperfections!

a. Jesus does not dwell in the tabernacle for his own sake. He has no need of our goods, nor service, nor love. No creatures, not even the creatures of thousands of worlds, are able to

increase his glory on the heavenly throne, which is unlimited. "I have said to the Lord, thou art my God, for thou hast no need of my goods." Ps. xv, 2.

b. He dwells there for our sake.

Loving King that he is, he desires to abide in our midst day and night. "In Jesus Christ we possess all, and Jesus Christ is all to us. Are you desirous of having your wounds healed? He is the physician. Are you burning with fever-heat? He is the fountain of living water. Does sin humble you to the ground? He is mercy. You need assistance? He is strength. You fear death? He is life. You flee darkness? He is light. You long for heaven? He is the way. You seek nourishment? His flesh is meat indeed." St. Ambrose.

2. *The flame consumes itself.*

Behold the fiery love of Jesus!

a. Jesus sacrifices himself for every one of us.

In Holy mass Jesus sacrifices himself entirely to his Heavenly Father. Conc. Trid. sess. 22, de sacrif. miss. cap 1 et 2. He sacrifices for us his body, his blood, his honor, his majesty, in one word—himself, wholly and unconditionally.

b. Jesus gives himself to every one of us.

By Holy Communion Jesus becomes our food. Conc. Trid. sess. 13 de euchar. can. 1 et 4. "Our flesh is nourished by the body and blood of Christ, so that our soul is satiated with God himself. Tertullian.

3. *Its flame never dies away.*

Behold the infinite love of the Lord, which is perpetual.

a. Jesus loves us at all times:

In the past: Many centuries ago Jesus instituted this mystery of the altar. Nearly all things have changed since. The love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament remains the same for ever.

In the future: So long as the Church shall last, i. e., to the end of times, the treasure of the Holy Eucharist will be preserved to her. After the lapse of centuries still to come, the love of Jesus will remain unimpaired. When our bones shall

be decayed and shall have been scattered to the winds, the voice of love will be heard from the tabernacle: "Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Mt. xi, 28.

b. Jesus loves notwithstanding the ingratitude of men.

Alas! how ungrateful are we toward the God of charity in the Blessed Sacrament! Negligence as regards divine service. Unbecoming behaviour in the house of the Lord. Lukewarmness at Holy Communion. Sacrilegious reception. Nevertheless, the charity of Jesus, far from becoming extinct, does even not diminish. Of this ardent charity of our sacramental God we may say: "Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench charity; neither can the floods drown it." Cant. viii, 6, 7.

PART II.

The Sanctuary Lamp symbolizes the qualities of our love towards Jesus.

This love must be

1. *Tending heavenward.*

As the flame before the tabernacle tends upward, so it ought to be with our love also. We should forget all earthly things, and our own selves. Seek not temporal advantages, neither sweet consolations, nor the praise of men. Whenever you attend Holy Mass, or receive Holy Communion, seek only the Lord and the salvation of your soul.

2. *Consuming itself.*

Like the flame before the tabernacle, our love should consume itself. This is the case, if we appreciate the most holy sacrament above all things, and are willing to make any sacrifice in order to come to Jesus,

a. By frequent attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. The ardent zeal of so many who, although living in the country far from church, are so regular in attending divine service, should confound the negligence of those who, living near the church, either come too late, or do not come at all, to the house of God.

b. By frequent reception of Holy Communion.

If you truly love Jesus, you desire to be united with him. Look round about, and see how many of your friends and neighbors abash you by their zeal in frequenting the holy sacraments, whilst your heart is cold and feels no desire for the angelic bread.

3. *Burning continually.*

As the light in the sanctuary never goes out, so the fire of our love to Jesus should never dwindle.

a. Whether on account of the reviling of the world.

Zealous communicants, and visitors of the Most Blessed Sacrament, are often the aim of sharp tongues. Do not mind their talking.

b. Or of changing your state of life.

Many who were zealous in their younger years, grow cold in the married state. It ought not to be.

c. Or of advancing age.

Great zeal in youth, great negligence in old age. Such is often the case. Yet there are particular motives for persons of mature and old age to frequent the holy sacraments; one of which is the good example they owe to their children, and to youth generally.

Peroration: Oh! that this lamp might be a continual warning to every one of us to nourish in our souls love to the Blessed Sacrament! "Love him who for love of you has descended into these species, and has changed the substance of the bread into the substance of his body, that by debasing himself, he might exalt you, and unite the light of his glory with the dust of your weakness." St. Augustine.

Joseph Schuen.



Third Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

“Cast all your solicitude upon him ; for he hath care of you.” I Pet. v, 7. Men have no great reverence for Divine Providence. Although convinced of their entire dependence on God, they show by their continual complaints that they put but little confidence in him. Therefore I will endeavor to convince you, first that we never have sufficient cause to complain of Divine Providence; secondly, that we should bow before its all-wise dispensations, although they should be apparently contrary to our welfare.

PART I.

WE NEVER HAVE REASON TO COMPLAIN OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

That I may not resemble a physician who attempts to cure a disease before knowing its cause, I must at the outset investigate the cause of this feeble confidence.

1. *Lack of faith* is the cause. When the weather is exactly as you wish it ; when your harvest is plentiful ; when your health gives you no cause of being alarmed ; you believe firmly that God is solicitous and bountiful in your regard. But when the weather is unfavorable ; when your barns are not filled with the fat of the earth ; when your health fails ; you are rather inclined not to believe in Divine Providence at all, or to assume that you have been neglected by the Almighty. Are these common complaints worthy of Christians ? The Prophet justly rebukes such men, by saying : “Understand, ye senseless among the people ; and you fools, be wise at last. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? or he that formed the eye, doth he not consider ?” Ps. xciii, 8, 9. Do you suppose that God does not know your wants, or hear your petitions ? He takes care of all his creatures, be they ever so little. He made the little and the great ; and he hath equally care of all.” Wisd. vi, 8.

2. True, sometimes *God defers his help* to the last moment, when all human aid is despaired of. But he waits intentionally so long, that we may become firmly convinced of our having been aided by him alone. It is for the same reason that Jesus reminds us of the care the Heavenly Father takes of the ravens, who are said to be of all animals the most neglected by their parents. "Consider the ravens, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, neither have they store-house, nor barn, and God feedeth them. How much are you more valuable than they?" Lk. xii, 24. Before him, the royal Prophet had exclaimed in amazement: "Praise ye the Lord, who giveth to beasts their food, and to the young ravens that call upon him." Ps. cxlvi, 49. "Just when we despair of all human assistance, we commonly perceive the divine assistance," is the appropriate remark of St. Peter Damian. Could a woman meet with a more seemingly cruel fate than Susanna? Although innocent, nay a heroine, she was found guilty of adultery, and sentenced to death. And when the people had lifted their hands to cast stones at her, she did not complain of Divine Providence, but committed herself to the divine protection. "And she weeping looked up to heaven, for her heart had confidence in the Lord." Dan, xiii, 35. And God sent his youthful messenger Daniel just in time to save her from the hands of her calumniators, and to have the stones which had been already lifted against Susanna, cast at the two aged reprobates. Other striking examples are the city of Samaria IV Kings vi and vii; and King Josaphat ii, Par. xx.

3. *God is anxious to bring us aid.* He has a greater desire to help us, than we have to be helped. He is our Father. If you—such is the reasoning of God's Son himself—if you, being evil, cannot refuse to your children what they are in need of; how much greater must be the willingness of your Heavenly Father to grant your petitions? "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him!" Mt. vii, 11.

Sometimes, however, we do not receive what we ask for. St.

Isidore gives the explanation in these words: "God often does not hear us according to our will, that he may hear us according to our salvation." He would not spare the temporal life of your child, to give him life everlasting. He did not deliver you from a protracted disease, because so he promoted your everlasting glory, etc.

PART II.

WE MUST BOW WITH RESIGNATION BEFORE THE DISPOSITIONS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

1. Knowing that God will grant our petitions, although we be apparently forsaken, we should often, especially in our necessities, make an act of faith, firmly believing that he is our Father. Then you will believe also that whatever he may send is salutary to you, because it comes from the hand of your Father.

2. Abstain from wicked expressions such as are often uttered by foolish people, who say: God has forgotten or forsaken me. God ought not to have done this or that. By talking thus you would resemble the proud king Alphonso of Arragon, who used to say with his blasphemous tongue, if he had been present at the creation of the world, he would have advised the Creator to make many improvements.

3. In all your wants betake yourselves confidently to the succour of your Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost himself is witness that God never refused a grace to him who invoked him with a heart full of confidence: "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded." Eccles. ii, 11. On the other hand God dislikes very much our want of confidence in him. When the Apostles, aroused by a great tempest, so that the ship was covered with waves, hastened to awake their Master, crying out: "Lord, save us, we perish," he rebuked them for their lack of confidence, because he was asleep, and said: "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Mt. viii, 25.

4. We should endeavor to make resignation to God's holy will, so to speak, our second nature, by expecting the dispositions of Divine Providence not according to our wishes, but according to the will of God. And if the disposition of his providence

should prove contrary to our expectations, let us firmly believe that it is all for our welfare, and that the time will come, when we shall see and understand it. In such cases we should exclaim with the Prophet: "This is the Lord's doing; and it is wonderful in our eyes." Ps. xvii, 23. J. E. Campadelli.

IV.

MOTIVES OF SPECIAL DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

We are sufficiently justified in our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1, by the revealed will of Jesus, as manifested by wonderful visions enjoyed by Blessed Margaret Alacoque; 2, by the approbation of the Church made known by the institution of the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and by the approval of those confraternities whose particular object is the veneration of this divine heart; 3, by the example of so many pious Christians who in former times cultivated, especially in our present times and cultivate, this devotion. It may, however, be serviceable to review the motives which prompt the faithful to bestow special homage on this, our treasure, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These motives are:

1. *The greatest commandment.* "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." God gave the above wording, because the heart is the seat of love. "As it is natural to the fire to burn, so it is natural to the heart to burn with loving. The life of the heart is love. Therefore, it is impossible that a heart desirous of living should be destitute of love." St. Thomas Aquinas. As the soul sees by means of the eyes, and hears by means of the ears, so she loves by means of the heart. Inferences from this doctrine, are as follows:

a. The heart of Jesus is the seat of the infinite love he entertained toward his Heavenly Father and all men. In consequence of his union with the Godhead, his heart was capable of infinite love. The ardent charity of this heart is presented to our eyes by flames of fire coming forth from it. "Behold my heart, so overwhelmed with love to men, cannot restrain within it the flame of love;"

such are the words of Jesus himself addressed to Blessed Margaret.

b. It is but just and fair to love in return this heart full of divine love. If the heart of Jesus loves us so tenderly, what else can we do but love it in return? And what can be so worthy of our love as this divine heart?

2. The sublimest model. "Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren." Rom. viii, 29.

a. The heart of Jesus is the seat of perfect sanctity. 'It is by general consent that all virtues, as well as all vices, are imputed to the heart. Hence we speak of a bad and good heart, of a hard and tender heart, etc. Jesus himself says: "Learn from me, because I am meek and humble of heart."

b. Therefore we find in this Sacred Heart true sanctity for our own, by keeping it ever as our model before our eyes, so that our hearts may be made conformable to this divine pattern; and by offering up this infinitely perfect heart of our Mediator in recompense for our many imperfections.

3. The unlimited dignity of the Sacred Heart.

a. This heart of the God-man is most intimately united with his body and soul, and by his divinity, with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

b. Consequently, the adoration of this Sacred heart extends to his whole body and soul, nay, to his Godhead, which is inseparable from the Father and the Holy Ghost. On this ground, the devotion of the Sacred Heart is the substance of the worship of God.

4. The ardent desire of Jesus that *a.* all men should know and venerate his heart, which is the seat of infinite charity. What can be more profitable to us, and more acceptable to God, than meditating on his infinite charity? *b.* His desire that we should draw from it abundant graces. "Make it known to the whole world that I shall set no measure to my graces to those who will seek them in my heart." Words addressed to Blessed Margaret. Experience teaches, that states, congregations, and

individuals who have betaken themselves for succour to this divine heart, have found help in their necessities.

5. *The wickedness of the world.*

a. The ingratitude of men, in spite of the innumerable proofs of charity in Christ's life, passion and death, particularly in the Most Blessed Sacrament. Therefore, it is becoming that we should recompense the divine heart, the seat of despised charity. Jesus himself assigned this to Blessed Margaret as a motive, why he desired to have the Feast of the Sacred Heart instituted.

b. The coldness and immorality of men. If in spite of all the dire calamities befalling the world men heap sin upon sin as in the days of Noe, what other means are then left to warm human hearts, thus cold as ice, than to invite them to approach this furnace of divine charity? St. John the Evangelist said in a vision to St. Gertrude: "The Most High will make known to men the sweetness of his heart in the last age of the Church, that the world having grown cold in divine charity may hear it, and be ignited again by his fire of charity."

6. Lastly, let us remember that the heart of Jesus is a true human heart. Let this reflection increase

a. Our courage and confidence in all necessities. "For we have not a high-priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but one tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin. Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." The human heart of Jesus entertains human feelings towards us. This is a great consolation.

b. Let it increase our zeal in following Jesus, whose sanctity appears in the form of human virtues, as humility, meekness, patience, resignation, compassion, etc. "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." Mt. xi, 26.

Peroration: If there were yet another motive required to prompt you to an ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I would call your attention to the many indulgences bestowed on the devotion, the feast and confraternity of the Sacred Heart, Apostolate of the Sacred Heart.

G. Patiss.

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul.

II.

THE TREBLE GRACIOUS LOOK.

Great homage is paid to St Peter, especially on this day. How did he obtain this glory? It is the fruit of a treble gracious look which Jesus cast upon him, and of the ardent love wherewith he returned the grace of his Lord and Master.

I. THE LORD LOOKED ON PETER AT THE SEA OF GENEZARETH, AND PETER BECAME AN APOSTLE.

1. In the order of grace, Jesus, the sun of justice, produces the same effects as the vernal sun produces in nature: changing and renewing the heart of man for his salvation. "And he who sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new." Apoc. xxi, 5. "O God of hosts, convert us; and show thy face, and we shall be saved." Ps. lxxix, 8. "Turn not away thy face from me; decline not in thy wrath from thy servant." Ps. xxvi, 9.

2. We see this fulfilled in St. Peter.

a. Jesus looked on him. "Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, * * * and he saith to them: Come after me." Mt. iv, 18. "Jesus looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon," etc. John i, 42.

b. A great change was in consequence wrought in Peter: *Externally:* He received a new name: "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted, Peter." John i, 42. He received with the other apostles a new office: "I will make you fishers of men." Mt. iv, 19.

Internally: After he had forsaken all things for the love of Jesus, he showed:

The greatest *attachment* to him. "He walked upon the water to come to Jesus." Mt. xiv, 29. On the mountain he wanted tabernacles made, to be ever with Jesus. xvii, 4. He said with decision: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" John vi, 69. He was ready to go with him both into prison and to

death. "When he heard, it is the Lord, he cast himself into the sea, to come sooner to Jesus. John xxi, 7.

The *sublimest knowledge* regarding the nature and person of his Master. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Mt. xvi, 16. Since the divine mysteries are not revealed but to little ones, i. e., humble ones (Mt. xi, 25), and "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul" (Wisd. i, 4), how profound must have been the humility of this Apostle! Lk. v, 8; John viii, 8.

The most *ardent love*. "I will lay down my life for thee." John xiii, 37. "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." John xxi, 15.

3. The Lord looks upon us also with a friendly and kind look.

a. He takes care of us in the order of nature, who has "graven us in his hands." Isai. xlix, 15. In the order of grace he imparts to us sanctifying grace, and actual graces by his inspirations.

b. Oh! that we might return love for love, ardent love for ardent love, consisting in entire abandonment to God! St. Theresa used to say, she could bear to see others in a greater glory than herself, but she could not bear to see them love God more ardently than herself.

II. JESUS LOOKED ON PETER IN THE COURT OF THE HIGH-PRIEST, AND HE BECAME A PENITENT.

1. The time of storm and trial arrived for the Apostle.

a. "Peter followed afar off." Lk. xxii, 54. Unmindful of his Master's warning (v, 31), not believing his prophecy (v, 34), he exposed himself to danger.

b. Thrice he denied his Master in answer to the inquiry of a maid-servant. Mk. xiv, 66. A sad, ignominious, fall indeed!

2. Jesus looked on Peter a second time. No sooner had Peter committed his great sin, than the Lord, turning, looked on him. Lk. xxii, 61.

3. In consequence of this gracious look, Peter became a truly great penitent. Remembering the prophetic words of the Lord, "Peter went out and wept bitterly." Lk. xxii, 62. Peter is a model to every penitent soul:

a. He *did not defer* his penance for one moment. As soon as the Lord, turning, looked on him, he went out and wept bitterly. The longer the sin dwells in your heart, the more your will is weakened. "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For his wrath shall come on a sudden; and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee." Eccles. v, 8.

b. His penance was *sincere*, as is expressed by the word "bitterly." When the light of grace shone upon him, he was sorry for not having believed in the prophetic word of his Master, for having been negligent in prayer, rash in exposing himself to danger, and ungrateful to his kindest Master. Therefore he wept bitterly "tears which from the cheek go up even to heaven" (Eccles. xxxv, 19), tears so seldom in our days.

c. His penance was *efficacious*. "Peter went out" (Lk. xxii, 62), leaving the place of danger. The resolution to shun the proximate occasion of sin is the mark of efficacious penance.

d. He was *persevering* in his penance. For ever in his after life he was vividly conscious of his fall. According to an old tradition, St. Peter shed tears whenever he heard the cock crow. In preaching the Gospel he frequently dwelt on the subject of his own fall, and required of St. Mark his companion to describe explicitly in his Gospel his denial of the Lord. How many remembrances are there of our sins, and yet how few are our penitential tears! Oh! that we might be as sorrowful over our sins as St. Peter was!

III. JESUS LOOKED ON PETER WITHOUT THE WALLS OF ROME, AND HE BECAME A MARTYR.

1. Henceforth we behold Peter in his apostolic labors. Chosen the supreme pastor of the Church (John xxi, 15), endowed with power from on high (Lk. xxiv, 49), burning with love for his Master, full of zeal for the salvation of souls, he wandered through one half of the then known world, preaching in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, till he reached Rome, from which metropolis of the world he governed the Church of Christ for twenty-five years. Like penitent David,

he was teaching the unjust the ways of God : and the wicked were converted to the Lord. Ps. l, 15. Rome was soon crowded with disciples of the Cross ; even in the imperial palace the crucified had his adherents.

2. The persecution rages, and St. Peter earns the crown of martyrdom. The word of the Lord was then fulfilled : "When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands ; and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not." John xxi, 18.

Simon the Magician, who had left Samaria for Rome, obtained by his sorceries the favor of the Emperor Nero. He proclaimed that, on a certain day, he would ascend to heaven in the sight of the people. He was indeed lifted into the air, but at the prayer of both Peter and Paul he fell prostrate to the ground ; in consequence of which he was so severely hurt that he died a few days later in rage and despair. Thereupon Nero bade the Apostles to be seized.

Yielding to the entreaties of the Christians, who desired to see his precious life prolonged, St. Peter took to flight. He had scarcely left the city, when Jesus appeared to him, and, looking upon him, bade him return, and remain at his post. Peter returned at once to suffer the death of martyrdom. Through humility he asked, as a favor, to be crucified with his head *downwards*, deeming himself unworthy to be crucified after the manner of his Master.

5. Thus St. Peter sets before us an example of generous charity. For, as Christians and penitents, we should never attempt to escape the cross. Generous charity requires of us to give ourselves entirely to God, be it on Tabor or Calvary ; to abandon all that is dear to us, if it be necessary for the sake of God ; and to persevere in this spirit of self-sacrifice.

Peroration : Let it not be in vain that the Lord looks graciously upon us ! If we return his look by ardent love, we shall be found worthy of the beatific vision.

Sartori.

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

DIVINE BLESSING.

The disciples had labored all the night, and had taken nothing, because Jesus had not been with them. When at his word they let down the net, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes. Daily experience teaches the doctrine inculcated by this Gospel, to-wit: Our success in all things depends on the divine blessing to obtain which we must employ the proper means.

I. OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE DIVINE BLESSING.

How indispensable and important the divine blessing is for our prosperity and welfare, we are taught:

1. By reflecting on the origin of all things.

a. All things were made by the word of God, and without him was made nothing that was made. John i, 3. The same God, by creating light, reduced chaos to order; and be blessed all creatures.

b. Things cannot be preserved, nor can they thrive except by the almighty working of the same God, who thus continues creation.

2. By reflecting on the curse of sin, and the nature of things.

a. The earth and its inhabitants have been cursed by God, in consequence whereof the original blessing was diminished, and the earth became a vale of tears; so that we are in need of a merciful and bountiful God, to take away the curse.

b. Man can plant, but cannot produce one grass-blade. The same God who rained manna from heaven, and gathered the fishes in Peter's net and multiplied the bread, must give the blessing. Man is, moreover, short sighted even in regard to what he has received, viz.: the ability to help himself. "Unless

the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it." Ps. cxxvi, 1.

3. By reflecting on the various effects of the divine blessing :

a. *Life*. It is the result of the blessing imparted to the first couple. Birth of Isaac, Samuel, John the Baptist.

b. *Daily food*. "The eyes of all hope in thee, O Lord; and thou givest them meat in due season. Thou openest thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature." Ps. cxliv, 15, 16.

c. *Prosperity*. "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he humbleth, and he exalteth." I Kings ii, 7.

d. *Domestic happiness*. "House and riches are given by parents; but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord." Prov. xix, 14. Good children, successful undertakings, protection in peril, all come from God.

Hence the Church extends her benedictions over all nature, aiding man in all his necessities.

II. MEANS OF OBTAINING THE DIVINE BLESSING.

1. General means. Holy Scripture relates II Kings vi, that the house of Obbedom was blessed, because the ark of the covenant abode there three months. God gives us thereby an important instruction, intimated symbolically.

a. By the ark being the divine sanctuary. You are a divine sanctuary also. Endeavor to be in the state of grace, so that by being a child of God, you may have the first claim on your Father's blessing. Peter was not blessed, before Jesus entered his ship.

b. The ark was surmounted by two adoring cherubim. Pray, and you will receive. (Recommendation of the blessing before and after meals). Honor and fear God. "Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." Ps. cxxvii, 4.

c. The ark contained the two tables of the Law. Keep the commandments. "Behold, I set forth in your sight this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing, if you obey the command-

ments of the Lord, your God." Deut. xi, 25. It is a matter of fact that the children of Israel were blessed as long as they lived up to God's commandments.

d. A vessel containing Manna. Make use of the means of grace deposited in the Church.

e. The rod of Aaron; and outside was fastened some lead, being a fragment of vessels that once belonged to Core, Dathan, and Abiron who revolted against the legal priesthood. Honor the ministers of God, who avenges, even on earth, offences committed against his anointed.

2. Special means. A special blessing rests:

a. On the observance of the third, fourth, and seventh commandments. "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Gen. ii, 3. No one but he that sanctifies this day has a claim on its blessing. God provided Manna for the Sabbath day, although he did not rain on that day the bread of heaven. He provided food for the children of Israel during the Sabbath Year also; and afterwards sent them into the Babylonian captivity for precisely as many years, as the number of the neglected Sabbath years amounted to. Peter was blessed after hearing the word of God. As to the fourth commandment, remember the blessing and curse out of Noe's mouth; the blessing of Isaac, etc. "The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children; but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation." Eccles. iii, 11. Hence the blessing of parents is kept in veneration everywhere, even among Gentiles. Regarding the seventh commandment we read Ps. v, 13. "Thou wilt bless the just. Ill-gotten wealth never thrives." Ps. xxxvi, 25.

b. On domestic discipline. The house of Obadedom had been turned into a church, since the ark abode there. Let your house be a church also, by religious practices, prayer, spiritual reading; by abhorring blasphemies and curses; and by maintaining peace under your roof. "Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the peace makers." Mt. v.

c. On industry, and almsgiving. Industry is the indispensable condition of the divine blessing, according to the declara-

tion made in paradise. Peter labored and was blessed. With regard to almsgiving we read: "He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and he will repay him." Prov. xix, 17. "He that giveth to the poor, shall not want; he that despiseth his entreaty, shall suffer indigence." xxviii, 27.

Peroration: If in spite of your endeavors to comply with the above conditions, God rewards you by crosses and afflictions, oh! then be strong in faith. God has a two-fold blessing for us in store: the blessing of Esau consisting merely in "the fat of the earth, and in the dew of heaven from above" (Gen. xxvii, 39); and a blessing of Jacob, which renders you a child of promise. The Promised himself hangs on the Cross, inviting you to carry the cross after him. Ever since, the cross is the bridal gift of his privileged friends. Simon was blessed with fishes, Peter with the cross. Therefore be desirous for the everlasting blessing. And if God, that you may obtain it, leads you through thorns and briars, remember those heroic souls who, being convinced of the blessing of the cross, implored our Lord for crosses and sufferings.

Hungari.

IV.

THE RAPID SPREAD OF PROTESTANTISM IS NO MIRACULOUS EVENT.

Besides many other proofs of her divine origin, our Holy Church calls the attention of mankind to her miraculous spread all over the world. Protestantism, however, pretends that its divine origin can be proved by the same evidence of miraculous propagation. Its founder himself, Martin Luther, said in his peculiar manner: "Although I have wrought none of the little miracles, it must be regarded as a great miracle, that gave such a heavy shock to the Serpent's uppermost head, papacy with its body." That we may form a right opinion of this pretended miracle, let us consider



I. THE STATE OF THINGS PREVIOUS TO THE REFORMATION.

You would err greatly if you were to suppose that the germ of the religious revolt was planted by the so-called Reformers.

1. Previously to the time of the Reformers we find:

a. A strong spirit of opposition to the Church. Call to mind the councils of Basle and of Constance; the impetuous machinations of Wicliffe, John Huss, and the Hussites.

b. This contempt of ecclesiastical authority was called forth by scandalous stories in vogue about the Pope, Cardinals, and bishops, which were eagerly devoured by the people; for it is the propensity of human nature to feed on scandal.

c. Therefore "reform in the head and members" was the favorite topic of that age; so that whoever would take the leadership in reformatory movements was sure of gaining popularity.

2. The times favored exceedingly the attempt of the reformers.

a. The Episcopal sees were mostly occupied by men who were distinguished neither by science nor virtue, but by birth only. These gentlemen found no time to look after church affairs, the less, as many of them were at the same time possessors of principalities.

b. The inferior clergy, neglected by the bishops, were in many countries, not well educated; and as for morals, were often found wanting.

c. After the invention of the art of printing the study of the humanities, or polite literature, had obtained a predominance over all other sciences. The humanists, void of thorough theological science, by gaining the preponderance, undermined authority. It was a long time before the universities of Cologne and Louvain decided against Luther; whilst the other universities either looked at things with indifference, or were themselves carried away by the tempest.

II. THE MEANS EMPLOYED.

The "great miracle" of "rapid spread" vanishes into a mere

nothing, when we reflect on the means by which Protestantism was supported. The impartial reader of history assigns the following means :

1. *Human passions.* According to I Johnⁱ ii, 16 "all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." Judging from these words, Protestantism cannot be from above, since its origin resembles too much "all that is in the world." It is intimately associated :

a. With the *flesh*, for the concupiscence of which provision was made by repudiating all kinds of self-mortification, all works of penance, celibacy, etc.

b. With *avarice*, to which the protestant gospel was a gold mine. Is the Pope Anti-Christ, are the bishops the associates of anti-Christians popes, are cloisters "houses of fools," are Mass, Purgatory, etc., fables? To whom else but to the princes, and to all those who believe the new doctrine, do the church property and precious vessels, the cloisters and ecclesiastical funds belong? "All these will I give thee," is the language of the tempter who pretended to be a Reformer.

c. With *pride*, which is gratified by the repudiation of all authority, and by an unlimited claim of liberty.

It was a miracle that the Catholic Church transformed barbarous hordes into civilized nations, and produced innumerable Saints. It is no miracle to have destroyed the wonderful works performed by the Catholic Church. If the so-called reformation was a work of the Holy Ghost, where are its fruits, who are the Saints it has produced?

2. *Brute force.* A new doctrine spread by employing the fiercest measures of violence cannot claim a miraculous origin. But Protestantism was spread by the employment of brute force :

a. On the part of the Reformers.

Luther advises the magistrate "to use sword and force that the doctrine may be preserved in purity, divine service may be unsullied, and peace and unity be maintained." He demands

that the Catholics should be "judged without granting them a hearing or defence." In his popular writings he advises the murder of the bishops, and the destruction of all ecclesiastical foundations and cloisters. The farming population is advised by him to "strike right and left with knobs and flails."

Calvin concedes that by his advice, the Spaniard Servetus was burnt to death, adding: "I boast of the deed; for I am convinced that those who say, Heretics and blasphemers must not be punished, are guilty of blaspheming themselves."

Zwinglius carried the sword himself for the propagation of his gospel, and was killed in battle.

b. On the part of princes and magistrates.

No one can dispute that in the northern kingdoms of England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden Protestantism was introduced and maintained by brute force. In the Electorate of Saxony, the cradle of the Reformation, priests and laymen who refused to accept the new doctrine were banished from their country. In Hassia the Landgrave gave the priests and monks the choice, "either to confess Christ or to leave the country." The Prussian government published an edict A. D. 1525, according to which Catholics were to be punished by the sword. Those making pilgrimages were to be hanged. There is not a Protestant province in Germany into which the new religion was introduced without coercive power.

3. *Falsehood.* It is a lamentable fact that Protestantism, from its very origin up to our days, has been employing as the lever of its "evangelical truth," falsehood in its divers forms:

a. *Calumny.* Luther set the example to his disciples, by calling the Roman Pontiff "devil," "Anti-Christ;" and the Catholic Church, "the Babylonian harlot." Luther degraded himself so far as to publish the most scandalous lampoons against Pope and clergy, illustrated in the most shameless manner.

b. *Perversion of truth.* The Catholic doctrines of veneration of Saints, co-operation with divine grace, confession, indulgences, etc., are represented as adoration of the Saints—their bodies and images, as contempt of the Redemption, and reliance

on one's merits, contempt of the merits of Christ, and as forgiveness of sins for a consideration, etc.

c. Forging and mutilation. If Luther himself dared to mutilate the text of Holy Scripture, who is to wonder at his disciples and followers fabricating a bull of convocation of the Council of Trent, which, although filled with nonsense and malignity, is regarded as authentic by many up to our days; or editing pseudo-Catholic catechisms, in order to dupe the people; or inventing Catholic creeds, in which converts curse their parents, etc.

Peroration: Who but must feel dismay at seeing the divine truth and the happiness of the people thus trifled with? And yet the rapid spread of Protestantism is cried out as a miracle! The kingdom of the father of lies was rapidly and widely spread. We know the reason, and are far from regarding it as a miracle.

P. A. Scherer.

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

MURDER OF THE SOUL.

A man enjoys two lives, one of the body and the other of the soul; so may he die two deaths, the death of the body and the death of the soul. Either death may be caused by violence of others, for which reason we distinguish two kinds of murders and murderers. The Holy Church has always interpreted the Fifth Commandment as directed against soul-murder, as well as against the taking away of physical life. And since the murder of souls is of daily occurrence, let me warn you against this atrocious crime.

I. WHEN ARE WE GUILTY OF THE MURDER OF THE SOUL?

As men can be murderers of the body either directly or indirectly, so is it with regard to the soul also.

A. *Directly*, by committing a deed, by which the ruin of a soul is either intended, or at least foreseen, to-wit.:

1. *Bad example.*

a. The efficacy of example, generally speaking, is very great. We have by nature a proclivity to imitate others. At the sight of the strength of others, we become conscious of our own strength. The heroism of martyrs inflamed many to make the same heroic profession of faith.

b. The efficacy of *bad* example is far the greater of the two. It is like a flame igniting barrels of oil or powder. The human heart, with its concupiscences, is as inflammable as oil; our perverse passions are as easily inflamed as powder. Bad example will produce its destructive effects with greater certainty, when it is afforded by reputable persons, or is often repeated, or conceals its perversity.

c. Therefore every kind of scandal is an attempt to murder souls, is a poisoning with all its consequences. Although he that scandalizes may not intend the ruin of souls, yet the entire

responsibility rests on him, because he could foresee these dreadful consequences; he is a murderer.

Alas! how great is the number of such murderers!

2. *Premeditated seduction:*

a. To *infidelity*, by fostering in others scepticism, by frivolous derision of revealed truth, and by rationalistic subtleties, etc. "My just one liveth by faith;" from which utterance of the Holy Ghost it evidently follows that whoever deprives his neighbor of his faith, murders him.

b. To *vice*. The vicious man seeks associates of his vices, and seduces others to mortal sin, or prepares them for it by degrees with Satanic cunning. Mortal (deadly) sin is indeed what its name implies; consequently the seducer is a real murderer.

B. *Indirectly*. Many more commit murder indirectly, as:

1. *Careless superiors* who neglect to watch over those committed to their care; who sleep, whilst the wolf kills the lambs.

2. Those who *do not prevent* the wicked deed,

a. From indifference to vice, which is often overlooked, if it only bears no temporal disadvantages. Examples.

b. Or from human respect. The wolf, when irritated, might inflict damage, wherefore it is deemed prudent not to disturb him in his occupation.

c. Or from desire of temporal advantage. For this reason many parents kill the souls of their daughters, by conniving at their keeping irregular hours, or by not watching their endangered innocence, because they hope for a suitable marriage.

3. All those who *do not come to the succor* of a soul, whom they know to be in peril, although they are able to help her out of it. If they neglect their duty in this regard, God will require the blood of the murdered victim at their hands. Vide Ezech. iii, 18.

Oh! beware of murdering souls! If your conscience accuses you, repent and do penance, reflecting on the atrocity of your crime.

II. IT IS A DREADFUL CRIME.

Reflect:

1. Whose work is the seducer performing?

a. The work of *Satan*; for "he was a murderer from the beginning." John viii, 4. The same crime deserves the same punishment.

b. He does the service of the *Serpent* in paradise. The curse pronounced by God on the dumb brute, which served involuntarily is spiritually fulfilled on the voluntary servants of the devil, in a more severe manner.

2. How enormous is the crime with regard to the damaged soul?

a. What is the *consequence*? Real death; separation from her supernatural fountain of life, from God; a spiritual dissolution, corruption. The *unhappiest* death; for the soul continues living her natural life, that she may feel the horrors of supernatural death. We frequently witness a foreboding of these horrors in the life of the sinner, especially on his death-bed. *Eternal* death. Many of those who once died, never rise to life again. If they die in their sin, death in the flames of hell will be their fate. Can you imagine anything more horrible than a murder of the soul, committed on your fellow-creature that was before innocent, virtuous, happy, and worthy of love?

b. What is the just punishment? God will fulfill his own command: "Thou shalt not pity him, but shalt require life for life, * * * that others hearing may fear, and may not dare to do such things." Deut. xix, 21, 20. The murderer of souls justly meets with the same fate that he has prepared for others; and he will hear the reproaches of the seduced at the judgment, and in hell for ever.

3. The wicked deed in its relation to God.

a. It destroys the work of God: the most magnificent creation of divine grace; the masterpiece of divine wisdom; the object of infinite divine charity. The only adequate punishment is everlasting destruction. Henry and Isabel of Navarre had only one son whom they loved exceedingly. Through the carelessness of the waiting maids he fell from a high balcony and died; whereupon one of them, for fear, committed suicide. Application.

b. It deprives God of his most precious and dearest possession; expelling him from the soul, which was the Garden of Eden, wherein the Lord walked, a magnificent temple, wherein he dwelt, an altar the sacrifices on which he joyfully accepted. "I am the Lord that love judgment, and hate robbery in a holocaust." Isai. lxi, 8. The appropriate punishment is exclusion from the kingdom of grace and salvation. "Thieves shall not possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 10.

c. It causes men to be enemies of God, who will perhaps seduce others also, so that the first murderer of souls is at his infernal work through generations, dishonoring God, murdering and destroying. Oh! how pernicious is this deed?

Peroration: Let this meditation render us cautious and conscientious for the future; but at the same time let it spur us on to expiate our wicked actions of the past, with regard to God and men!

Rinecker.

IV.

ON THE VIRTUE OF MEEKNESS.

"Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls." Mt. xi, 29. The Pharisees thought to have fulfilled the law by complying with its letter, or by avoiding the external sinful deed. Our saviour informed us that Christian virtue is a virtue of the heart, regulating even our thoughts. In this sense he explained the Fifth Commandment in this day's Gospel. That the words of our Saviour may bring forth fruit in our hearts, I will speak to you on meekness, the illustrious virtue which is opposed to all the trespasses against the Fifth Commandment. Christian meekness is a most necessary, and a most fruitful virtue.

PART I.

Our Saviour exhorts us to take him for our model, espec-

ially in the exercise of the virtues of meekness and humility; the two being inseparable. "Learn of me," etc. They are, indeed, the indispensable condition of every virtue. They impart to us the highest dignity, and make our soul resemble God.

1. Meekness is the indispensable condition of every virtue. In a disturbed heart virtue cannot spring forth, any more than can a fruitful life in nature when it is continually agitated by storms and tempests. If passion removes every good thought, how can virtue strike root? St. Chrysostom makes the appropriate remark, that as during the tempest of the ocean, so during the time of wrath, you cannot dwell on reasonable thoughts.

Without divine grace we are utterly powerless to acquire Christian virtue. God's Spirit is a spirit of peace, who will never abide in a soul where peace does not dwell. Man given to the vice of wrath, is one of those wicked, of whom the prophet says: "The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire. There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God." Isai. lvii, 20. Do you now understand why the Lord says: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." If we do not learn of him this virtue, we cannot profit by his example for the production of any other virtue.

2. Moreover, wherein consists the dignity of man? Is it in a high social position, or in the riches and treasures of the earth, or in dominion over our fellow-men, or in knowledge and science? The Gospel informs us that the true dignity of man consists in the virtue he possesses. "All the glory of the king's daughter is within in golden borders." Ps. xlv, 14. Only he who has succeeded in subduing his passions, has a claim to true human dignity and greatness. If others stand in amazement at the splendor of your house, if your servants tremble at the glance of your eyes, whilst you yourself are a servant of your passions, you are a miserable wretch in spite of all your glitter and gold. Meekness of heart is therefore not the effect of temper, but of combat and self-mortification. It is Chris-

tian virtue and sanctity, and as such it must be obtained by violence.

3. Meekness renders our soul similar to God. Heaven is the abode of eternal peace, and therefore a happy abode; and earth is a place of sorrows, because it is disturbed by discord and human passions. God is a God of peace. "His place is in peace." Ps. lxxv, 3.

This God of peace descended in the person of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, upon earth. In the form of a servant he exercised the virtue of meekness all his life time, from the manger to the cross.

We also are called upon to enter this kingdom of peace. For this end we are exhorted to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. But if our hearts be filled with wrath and enmity, we neither resemble our Father who is a God of peace, nor our Saviour, who is the prince of peace. Therefore our Lord invites us to follow him in meekness, and so to make ourselves worthy of the kingdom of heaven. "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart."

The virtue of meekness does not forbid us, however, to open our mouths in defence of truth and religion, or in depreciation of crime. "Mathathias the Machabee seeing a certain Jew coming to sacrifice to the idols, was grieved; and his reins trembled; and his wrath was kindled according to the judgment of the law." I Mach ii, 24. It is even our duty to stand up for truth and virtue. But even in such cases let us remember the meekness of our Saviour, knowing that meekness is also a *salutary* virtue.

PART II.

1. The first blessing resulting from the virtue of meekness is that it reconciles us to our enemies. Harshness and bitterness creates greater harshness and bitterness in the soul of our neighbor. Meekness opens his heart to us. Man has a strong inclination to resist truth and argument, but it is seldom that any one resists charity and kindness for any length of time.

The Apostle of the virtue of meekness, St. Francis of Sales, led by means of this virtue seventy-two thousand heretics back to the fold of the Church. God alone knows how many thousands have been encouraged by his spiritual writings, breathing the spirit of meekness, to choose the path of virtue and self-denial. St. Vincent of Paul said at the end of his blessed life, he had only three times in all his lifetime, and every one of those times in vain, uttered a severe reprimand. The Apostle warns us accordingly : "The servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be gentle toward all men, fit to teach, patient, with modesty admonishing those who resist the truth." II Tim. ii, 24. "Be ye kind one to another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God hath forgiven you in Christ." Eph. iv, 32. St. Chrysostom calls our attention to the meekness of Abraham shown even towards Dives, though he was in hell. He said to him : "*Son*, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life time." Lk. xvi, 25. He did not say : Thou tiger, thou cruel monster, nor the like.

2. By meekness we obtain the divine approval. God rejoices in seeing in man a reflection of his own perfections. By meekness we resemble God, who is kind to every one. Moses the favored servant of God is praised by Holy Scripture because of his meekness. "Moses was a man exceedingly meek above all men that dwelt upon earth." Numb. xii, 3. Holy Scripture mentions expressly that God chose him for his meekness. "He sanctified him in his faith and meekness, and chose him out of all flesh." Eccles. xlv, 4. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land," the land of promise, heaven, of which Chanaan was a figure. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Mt. v, 4, 9. They resemble the most the prince of peace, wherefore they are the worthiest of being called his children.

3. Meekness will obtain for us a high reward and great glory in heaven. Our reward will no doubt be proportionate to the arduous combat we had to encounter in subduing our passions. What can be more arduous than to forgive offences, to bear with patience cutting words and injurious actions, to reward

offences by charity and kindness? Hundreds of Christians would prefer protracted prayers and fasts. This incessant combat against ourselves will secure us the greatest glory in heaven.

Peroration: You say: I wish to be meek of heart; but my temper is too vehement, I cannot. Well, is it not essential to every Christian virtue, that it should be obtained by combating against our own natural inclinations? How bloody was the struggle through which Jesus Christ became our prince of peace? "He made peace through the blood of his cross." Col. i, 20. His blood and wounds, his pierced hands, feet, and heart, and his bitter death are the price of our peace. The Saints followed this Saviour in the same struggle. One word of our Lord suffices to still the waves and the sea; and will it not suffice to still the waves of your turbulent heart? "At thy rebuke they shall flee; at the voice of thy thunder they shall fear." Ps. ciii, 7. "He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm." Mt. viii, 26,

Or you object: What will my enemy think of me, when I reward his offences with meekness and humility? Do not trouble yourself about his thoughts. Is it not enough to know that God loves you and applauds your action, nay, that he regards you as a Christian hero? Still the time will come, when your enemy will admire you.

Let the world, however, think of meekness whatever it pleases. We know that nobility of soul and hidden virtues constitute our worth before God. Therefore let us learn of the Lord to be meek and humble of heart, and we shall find peace for our souls in this temporal life, and everlasting peace of heaven.

Joseph Ehrler.

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

ON FREQUENT COMMUNION.

“My heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread.” Ps. ci, 5. Every creature needs food for the preservation of its life, and expects it from the hand of God. “All expect of thee that thou give them food in season.” Ps. ciii, 28. Man expects of God his food for body and soul. The most precious nourishment of our soul is the Holy Eucharist, the figure of which we see in the miraculous bread of the Gospel. “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.” John vi, 53. The Most Blessed Sacrament is therefore the principal object of our divine worship; and the religious life of a Christian is measured by his devotion to this treasure of our altars. That our love towards this Most Blessed Sacrament may be enkindled anew, I will furnish you with reasons wherefore you should often receive Holy Communion. These reasons are taken from the design of Jesus Christ in instituting this Sacrament, from the many wants of our souls, and from the example of the early Christians.

I. CHRIST’S DESIGN IN INSTITUTING THIS SACRAMENT.

1. “I have compassion on the multitude, says Jesus, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.” I have compassion on the multitude, said Jesus, when he was to take our flesh for the sake of our redemption. He was moved with the same tender compassion, when being obliged to return to heaven, he found this admirable means of remaining with us under the species of bread and wine, whilst at the same time he could be in heaven with the angels and Saints. For fear, his children wandering through the desert of this life might faint in the way, he gave them this miraculous bread. Actuated by tender love and ardent desire to become, under the form of bread and wine, the food of our souls, he said, when he was to institute this memorial of his infinite charity: “With desire I

have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer." Lk. xxii, 15.

If the great king of heaven and earth longs for our souls, are we not to invite him to come frequently under our roof? Can we call ourselves the friends of Jesus, if we have no desire to visit our friend, if we let an entire year pass, without receiving our Redeemer?

How great was the love to Jesus, by which his friends were animated! Mary the sister of Lazarus rose in haste when she heard of the Lord's coming. Zacheus descended from the tree as soon as he heard Jesus was to enter his house, and he, the sinner, became a son of Abraham.

2. Our desire should increase when we reflect on the food itself. Jesus chose our daily nourishment, bread and wine, to be the species of his body and blood. Could he have expressed his desire of being united with us in a more persuasive manner? This bread is not only to be the form and species under which Jesus is intimately united with us, but it is to be at the same time, a memorial of his sacred passion. "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come." I Cor xi, 26. If we adore the love which Jesus showed on the Cross by giving his life for his friends, let us reflect that his love in the Holy Eucharist is, so to say, a continual passion and death for us.

If we were to hear of this Blessed Sacrament for the first time on this day, how great would be our admiration, and how ardent our love! If we have no desire to receive this greatest treasure, we have reason to fear that the men of Ninive and the queen of Saba will rise in judgment against us.

II. THE MANY WANTS OF OUR SOUL.

All wants of our soul are satiated by this angelic bread. The strongest of all desires is the union with the infinite God, with the spouse of our soul. By Holy Communion the Son of God descends into our hearts, that we may possess him in this earthly life. Ever since man was cast out of paradise, his

soul has felt an ardent longing to behold the face of her Lord again, and to approach again God, her Lord. This hope animated the Patriarchs and Prophets and the people of Israel. This desire led the nations so far astray as to make idols with their own hands, and to worship them as if they were God.

By Holy Communion the Incarnate God descends into our hearts really and substantially, strengthening our souls against the power of sin, and the attacks of the devil. As the destroying angel passed by those houses which were sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal Lamb, so the devil flees before a soul that has received the body of the Lord.

This Sacred Supper prepares our soul for all virtues, renders us more like to God, and prepares us for our eternal union with the Lord. It is the "corn of the elect, and wine which maketh to spring forth virgins." Zach. ix, 17. It fosters our spiritual life in Jesus Christ. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." John vi, 52.

Nevertheless you feel no ardent desire for Holy Eucharist. Why are you careless? I say to you, as Jacob said to his sons:—"I have heard that wheat is sold in Egypt. Go ye down, and buy us necessities, that we may live and not be consumed with want." Gen. xlii, 2. Why defer to approach this treasure? "All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money, make haste, buy and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price." Isai. lv, 1.

You say, your daily pursuits absorb all your time, so that you find no time left to go to Holy Communion. Remember, your principal pursuit on earth is to obtain heaven. As those who are engaged in hard bodily work are obliged to renew often their strength by good nourishment, so those who are much engaged in worldly business are greatly in need of the grace and strength of this Sacrament.

Or you say, you feel not worthy of approaching frequently the table of the Lord. Remember, that no one is worthy, and that only the grace of God can prepare our souls for the Lord's Supper. Divine grace being imparted to us by Holy Commu-

ion, it is clear that your preparation is the more defective the longer you stay away from Holy Communion. Must you not avow that whenever your soul was strengthened with this heavenly bread, the fire of divine love was inflamed anew in your heart? And does it not follow that frequent Communion would render your souls worthier? Alas! your heart is withered, because you forgot to eat your bread.

III. THE EXAMPLE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

The habit of so many Christians of these days, of receiving Holy Communion only once or twice a year, was unknown to the early Christians.

Those three thousand who were baptized on the day of Pentecost were persevering in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Of the Christians at Corinth St. Paul says that they daily attended the Holy Sacrifice and received Holy Communion. St. Anaclete, the Roman Pontiff, speaks of the daily Communion of the faithful. The Christians during the ages of persecution, carried the bread of angels to their houses, that they might not be deprived of it, when hindered from attending divine service. St. Basil says, that in his time the faithful used to go to Communion four times a week. St. Epiphanius mentions the custom of receiving Holy Eucharist three times a week. St. Jerome relates the same with regard to the Spanish churches.

When this zeal threatened to abate, the Fathers of the Church, as St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom, employed all the strength of their eloquence to arouse the Christian spirit. In later times, when the faithful had left their first zeal, the Church assigned annual Communion as the limit of abstention, which no one is allowed to transgress and remain a member of the Church. Our Holy Mother has nevertheless repeatedly expressed her wish to see her children frequently strengthened by this heavenly bread, and the Fathers assembled at the Council of Trent desired that the faithful should receive Holy Communion at every Holy Mass they attended.

Nor was there a difference in this fervent zeal between the two sexes, in early Christendom. All without exception received frequently Holy Communion. Now-a-days men are very careless, although our Lord gave his divine body and blood to our sex first, to the Apostles.

Peroration: We all may die at any moment. We all have reason to pray every night: "O Lord, if this night be my last night, pray forsake me not." We are struck with terror, whenever we hear that a friend of ours has been suddenly taken away from us. The first consolation we seek in such cases is expressed in the question: When did he make his last confession, when receive his last Communion? Oh! admit no lukewarmness, no tepidity in the affair of salvation. Let us frequently receive the bread of heaven, that we may not faint in the way, but that, strengthened with it, we may with Elias ascend the holy mountain of God.

Joseph Ehrlers.

IV.

HOW WE SHOULD GO THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

"If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way." Mk. viii, 3. These words may be also applied to the way leading to our heavenly mansions. We all are strangers and pilgrims here on earth; "for here we have no permanent city: but we seek one to come." Heb. xiii, 14. That it may not be said of us, "They wandered in a wilderness, in a place without water: they found not the way of a city for their habitation" (Ps. cvi, 4), let us go the way to heaven.

I. OUR EYES CONSTANTLY DIRECTED TO THE END OF THIS WAY.

1. This end is so *sublime and desirable*, that nothing can be imagined more to be coveted. It is the cognition or vision of the eternal, divine, beauty, succeeded by a miraculous fire of charity, and the fruition of all the sweetness and perfection of this our sovereign good.

2. We *reach* this end: (*a*) not by idleness and lust, nor by disorderly ambition, and striving for earthly possessions, but (*b*) by innocence of life, purity of morals, and obedience to the divine commandments. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Mt. xix, 17.

3. All *evil deeds of men* originate from their losing sight of this last end. Thence come (*a*) the abuse of divine benefits, (*b*) negligence in regard to religious duties, (*c*) disorderly attachment to earthly things, (*d*) forgetfulness of the account we have to give of our temporal life; (*e*) avarice, which prevents all solicitude for our future life.

II. GOING CAUTIOUSLY FORWARD.

This caution is required by the nature of the way which is:

1. *Lonely and strait*. "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, which leadeth to life; and few are, who find it!" Mt. vii, 14.

2. Of *long duration*, comprising the space of not only a few years, but of a whole life.

3. *Insecure* and full of dangers, since it is infested by enemies who assault us *either* with violence: "Be sober, and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. v); *or*, with craftiness: "In this way wherein I walked, they have hidden a snare for me." Ps. cxli, 4. "They have searched after iniquities." Ps. lxiii, 7. How many are those who, surrounded by so many dangers, fall into perdition!

III. REFRESHING AND STRENGTHENING OUR SOULS WITH CELESTIAL BREAD.

If you neglect to eat your bread, the words of the Lord will be verified in you: "If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint in the way." Mk. viii, 3. This celestial bread is:

1. The *word of God*. "What food is to the body, the word of God is to the soul." St. Chrysostom. It urges you to fear and love God, and to hate sin.

2. *Meditation* on the divine commandments and blessings. By meditating on them the life of the soul is kept up. "I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread." Ps. ci, 5.

3. *Holy Communion*. It is properly the bread of our souls, imparting to them

a. Heavenly strength, St. Jerome calling it "the bread of the strong." It imparts so great strength, because it conceals Christ in our innermost soul. "Deliver me, O Lord, and set me beside thee, and let any man's hand fight against me." Job xviii, 3.

b. It is so necessary for our journey to heaven, that it is called the "viaticum." It is necessary to those who have ever been near to Jesus, in order to increase in virtue. These are they who from their childhood have been striving after virtue. Such a one was the wise man who said: "I was a witty child, and had received a good soul. And whereas I was more good, I came to a body undefiled." Wisd. viii, 19. Such a one was young Tobias who was trained in the fear of the Lord. (Tobias i.) It is necessary also to those who have drawn near to him from afar off, in order to keep up their good resolutions of amendment. These are they who, having by nature a strong propensity to vice, indulged in it for a considerable length of time, and the rebellion and perversity of whose nature, rendered inveterate by habit, it has been more difficult to overcome.

Let us all, strengthened with these three loaves of spiritual bread, our eyes constantly directed to our end, cautiously but confidently proceed along the strait and perilous way to our heavenly home.

Louis of Granada.

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

ON MORNING PRAYER.

“Every good tree yieldeth good fruit.” Mt. vii, 17. Far from being a good tree by nature, man becomes a good tree only by entering into an intimate union with God through Jesus Christ, in a similar way as the graft is united with the stem. Thus he becomes also “fruitful in every good work.” Col. i, 10. Prayer ranks among the principal fruits, wherefore, to be negligent in praying is a sure indication of a bad tree, of a bad Christian. It is a singularly alarming symptom in a Christian, when he omits daily prayer; when he omits prayer in the morning, in the evening, or before and after meals. Allow me today to direct your attention exclusively to Morning Prayer.

I. OUR OBLIGATION TO SAY MORNING PRAYER.

1. *Reason* teaches us this obligation.

a. What does reason assign as our destiny? To know and love God, to adore and praise him, to glorify him by working in his honor, especially by faithfully fulfilling the duties imposed on us by our state of life. But how few are there who incessantly keep this in view? Who remembers God always in the rush of business? It is therefore just and reasonable to devote to God at least the first and best part of the day, and to sanctify the day in its firstlings.

b. Even the Gentiles, although their reason was darkened by superstition, idolatry, and vices, acknowledged this duty, as their adage proves: *A Jove principium*, i. e., one ought to begin with God. Should the Gentiles excel us in wisdom?

c. The irrational creatures remind us of this obligation. In the morning the flower opens its *calix* (cup) to imbibe the first rays of the sun. And you, when awaking, should you not open your heart to God to receive his blessing? The early song of the birds, too, how urgent an exhortation is it to thank and praise God!

d. The benefits during the past night demand your gratitude. Your Father granted you refreshing rest, whilst many others passed a restless night in pains and sorrows. He preserved the life of your body, and of your soul also, by keeping away from you the tempting enemy, or by stretching out his hand to protect you from spiritual ruin. Where would you be now if you had died last night? Be thankful to the Lord.

e. The new day calls on you to say prayers of petition. Your duties are important and manifold; and your frailty is great. Countless dangers threaten body and soul, which we are powerless to foresee, escape, or avert. Does not our interest demand that we should implore the aid of him in whose hands is our fate?

f. Our relation to God as his children requires it. God is Father to us in the truest and sublimest sense of the word. He has, then, the highest claim on our first greeting, whenever consciousness is restored to us? Do you not expect of your children to bid you a kind "Good morning, father," "Good morning, mother?"

2. What reason demands, *Holy Scripture* insists upon:

a. The manna was to be gathered at early dawn because the first sun-beam melted and consumed it, "that it might be known to all, that we ought to prevent the sun to bless thee, and adore thee at the dawning of the light." Wisd. xvi, 28. Moreover, the firstlings of men, animals, and fruits, were to be offered to the Lord; every morning, a lamb was to be slaughtered in honor of the Lord. These sacrifices, indeed, were abolished, but their meaning remained. Our firstlings are our first thoughts in the morning, which we should direct to God. The lamb signifies our heart, as in the morning it is not contaminated by earthly cares, and daily trespasses.

b. It explicitly mentions the morning prayer as being the good habit of a wise man. "The wise man will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him; and he will pray in the sight of the Most High. He will open his mouth in prayer, and will make supplication for his sins. For if it shall please

the Great Lord, he will fill him with the spirit of understanding." Eccles. xxxix, 6-8. "I love them that love me; and they that in the morning early watch for me, shall find me." Prov. viii, 17.

c. By the example of Jesus Christ and his Saints. Of him who said: "Watch ye, praying at all times," it is written: "And rising very early in the morning, going out he went into a desert place; and there he prayed." Mk. i, 36. Elcana and Anna "rose in the morning, and worshiped before the Lord, and they returned and came into their house." Moses conversed every morning with the Lord; and before his morning prayer people did not approach him. David says of himself: "My eyes to thee have prevented the morning, that I might meditate on thy words." Ps. cxviii, 148. "O God, my God, to thee I do watch at break of day. For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways!" Ps. lxii, 1. Of the early Christians even Plinius a Gentile remarks: They meet before the break of day, to sing the praise of God."

Oh! let us follow the admonitions of reason and Scripture, imitating the example of Jesus and his Saints. Say not: I have no time to spare. You ought to find time for your most necessary duty.

II. THE RIGHT MANNER OF SAYING OUR MORNING PRAYER.

1. Begin your morning prayer by an act of mortification, by rising in due time and directing your first thoughts to God.

2. Let your body also participate in your prayer, in a kneeling position, your hands folded, your eyes directed to the crucifix, and pronouncing the words distinctly.

3. Your prayer should be:

a. A prayer of adoration. You must vividly represent to your mind that God is the Creator and sovereign Lord of your life and all your possessions. "Come, let us adore and fall down, and weep before the Lord that made us. For he is the Lord our God; and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." Ps. xciv.

b. A fervent prayer of thanksgiving for the innumerable benefits of grace and mercy received, particularly for protection during the night, for the renewal of your strength, and, by anticipation, for all the blessings reserved for this day by Divine Providence.

c. A prayer of earnest petition to spend the day in holiness, and by God's powerful protection to be protected from all evil of soul and body.

d. A firm resolution to shun all sins, particularly those to which occasion, inclination, and habit, allure you, and of which you had to repent last evening; further to comply faithfully with the duties of your vocation, to do good works whenever opportunity may be offered, and to accept with filial resignation all visitations and chastisements.

e. Then you should offer up yourself and your work to Almighty God, and sanctify all your actions by protesting against all vanity, selfishness, and uniting all your thoughts, words, and deeds, with the merit of Jesus Christ.

f. After having thus complied with your duty toward God, recommend yourself to your heavenly friends, to the Mother of God, the Holy Guardian Angel, and your Patron Saint.

Peroration: I wish to God that every one of you would never omit to say his morning prayer with fervent devotion. Your conduct, and the blessing of the day, depend principally on a good morning prayer. It is a seed that will grow into blossom and fruit during the day.

Weinzierl.

IV.

TREBLE STERILITY.

Regarding good works we often find a treble sterility among Christians.

I. THEY DO NOT PERFORM THE GOOD WORKS THEY ARE OBLIGED TO PERFORM.

1. When we scrutinize the life and morals of Christians of

the present day, we are obliged to confess that, in many cases, they do not at all resemble the virtuous life of the First Christians. For in early Christendom "being baptized or being a Christian" was the same as "leading a virtuous life," so that Tertullian had no hesitation in saying: "With us those who do evil deeds are no longer considered as Christians." Now-a-days the complaint of the Lord applies to the conduct of many faithful: "They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together: there is none that doeth good, no not one." Ps. xiii, 3.

2. Their lives are at variance with the Gospel and the example of Jesus. "The grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us. that renouncing impiety, and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in this world." We witness in many Christians,

a. The neglect of their duties towards God, themselves, and their neighbor;

b. No marks worthy of a Christian. "By what may I know that you are a Christian? Perhaps by your domicile? By your apparel? By your language, or food, or business?" St. Chrysostom.

3. The absence of good works admits of no excuse. For good works are

a. Possible, and even easy to be performed by the grace of God. "God is able to make all grace abound in you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work." II Cor. ix, 8.

b. They are necessary for all, for every sex, age, and state of life.

c. They alone are our welcome companions in death, and our deliverers at the judgment. A holy bishop said to the Emperor Anastasius, when kissing his imperial robe: "It is not this purple robe that will follow thee after death, but only piety and a virtuous life."

II. THEY DO NOT PERFORM THE GOOD WORKS IN THE RIGHT MANNER.

St. Augustine distinguishes in every good work two essential parts, to-wit.: the body, i. e., the external action, and the soul, i. e., the internal value. In scrutinizing from this point of view the apparently good works of the Christians, many of them will deserve the reprimand: "I find not my works full before my God." Apoc. iii, 1.

1. For, their works are defective with regard to *intention*. They are not prompted by a supernatural motive, not by impulse of grace, but by self-will only; not according to the will of God, and therefore deprived of his blessing and reward.

2. Other good works are performed after the manner of the *Pharisees*, the motives being temporal advantages, human praise, or human respect. "I say to you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and of the Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt. v, 20.

3. Many other good works are performed *negligently and by halves*. Many good works, moreover, are done, with a tardy hand and morose heart. Hence imaginary wealth, "They have slept their sleep; and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands." Ps. lxxv, 6, and real poverty; "Because thou sayest: I am rich, and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing; and thou knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Apoc. iii, 17.

III. MANY DO NOT PERSEVERE IN GOOD WORKS.

Jesus praised John his precursor for his perseverance. All Christians should strive to obtain the same praise. Yet most of them show their inconstancy in no matter more than in the performance of good works.

1. *Experience* teaches it. "Many become careless in prayer; at the beginning of their conversion they pray fervently, afterwards they pray with tepidity, then with boldness, until they neglect it at last entirely, as though they were secure of their salvation." The same inconstancy is to be deplored in regard to other good works.

2. *Holy Scripture* reprimands this fickleness. Those who are inconstant are represented as fools, who displease the Lord. "A holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun; but a fool is changed as the moon." Eccles. xxvii, 12. Only those who were in justice are to enter heaven and receive the crown. "To them indeed, who, according to patience in good works, seek glory, and honor, and incorruption, God will render life everlasting." Rom. ii, 10.

3. It is not in accordance with the shortness of human life. Jesus cursed the fig tree having only two leaves, though it was not the time for figs. Mk. xi, 13. The Lord requires of us fruit at any time. If you knew that the present year, or month, would be your last, how zealous you would be! "Whatever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly." Eccle. ix, 10. "For a Christian nothing is more salutary than to think daily: To-day I commence serving God: and this present day is the last of my life." St. Anthony, Patriarch of Monks.

Peroration: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Bordoni.

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

SIN OF INJUSTICE.

Every sin is an injustice, and every sinner an unjust steward, for he violates Christian justice; which may be summed up in these few words: "Shun evil, and do good." Properly speaking, however, he is unjust who, like the unjust steward, damages his neighbor in his temporal goods. Let us beware of this vice!

I. EVERY INJUSTICE IS SIN.

Many seem not to regard injustice as a sin; otherwise the world would not be so full of injustice. "Lying and theft have overflowed." Osee. iv, 2. Yet every injustice is sin, as is manifest,

1. From the *infallible judgment of God.*

a. God forbids injustice: "Thou shalt not steal." Exod. xx, 15. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house * * * nor anything that is his." v, 17. Do not any unjust thing in judgment, in rule, in weight, or in measure. Let the balance be just, and the weights equal, the bushel just, and the sextary equal. "I am the Lord thy God." Levit. xix, 35. The Apostle warns us earnestly: "That no man overreach or deceive his brother in business, because the Lord is the avenger of all such things." I Thess. iv, 6.

b. God forbids injustice *under great penalties: in this life.* "Treasures of wickedness shall profit nothing." Prov. x, 2. In the *future* life: "Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: Neither thieves nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God." I Cor. vi, 9. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation; but to reserve the just unto the day of judgment to be tormented." II Pet. ii, 9.

2. From the *consent of men*, who naturally abhor injustice under any form, and punish it severely. Nevertheless, injustice

abounds in the world: unjust lawsuits, usury, perjuries; dissipation of goods by the heads of families, domestic thefts by the wife and children, etc.

II. RESTITUTION OR RECOMPENSE IS AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION OF OBTAINING FORGIVENESS.

1. *This demand is founded*

a. On *natural* justice which requires to give to every one what is his own.

b. On *divine* law. In the *Old Testament* God commanded: "Whosoever shall sin, and despising the Lord, shall deny to his neighbor the thing delivered to his keeping, which was committed to his trust; or shall by force extort any thing, or commit oppression; or shall find a thing lost, and denying it, shall also swear falsely, or shall do any other of the many things, wherein men are wont to sin, being convicted of the offence, he shall restore all." Levit. vi, 2. In the *New Testament* Jesus did not promise Zacheus salvation, before he had said: "If I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him four-fold." Lk. xix, 8. "Render therefore to all their dues * * * Owe no man any thing." Rom. xiii, 7, 8.

c. On the *nature of true penance and conversion*. Every sin is to be healed by the opposite virtue; this injustice is to be healed by justice. The sinner is never allowed to delight any longer in the object of his sin; for "the sin is not forgiven, before the goods belonging to others be restored, if it be possible to do so. If you do not recompense the wrong, you will never obtain forgiveness of your injustice, although you shed as many tears, as all penitents shed together, and are yet to shed." St. Augustine.

2. *All pleas to the contrary are utterly worthless.*

a. You say, what I took away, was a *mere trifle*. Have you a right to steal trifling things? The last farthing, assuredly a trifling thing, must be paid. Mt. v, 26. Small things sum up gradually to a considerable amount.

b. You attempt to justify yourself with your *small wages and hardness of times*. But "didst thou not agree with me for a

penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way." Mt. xx, 13. Be sparing in your apparel, in your household, etc.

c. The poor allege their *want* and *indigence*. But are not, perhaps, idleness, intemperance, levity, the cause? "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom." Prov. vi, 6. "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." II Thess. iii, 10.

Peroration: Beware then of injustice, it being a detestable sin according to divine revelation. "The Lord thy God hateth all injustice." Deut. xxv, 16. The conversion of the unjust man is seldom. Neither Judas, nor any of the Pharisees, were converted, because they were given to avarice, to injustice. Men endeavor to become rich by injustice. But if it is very difficult for a rich man to enter heaven with his own possessions (Mt. xix, 28); how could the unjust man enter with the possessions of others? "They who would become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition." I Tim. vi, 9.

M. Koenigsdorfer.

VI.

WE SHOULD BE SOLICITOUS IN PROVIDING FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity; that when you shall fail, they may receive you in everlasting dwellings." Lk. xvi, 9. Who are these friends who will open heaven for us? They are in the first place the *poor* whose needs we relieved, and in the second place the *Saints* and *patrons* of our churches, who are able to receive us into everlasting dwellings, where they have been for so many years. We make them our friends by enriching and adorning their sacred dwellings on earth. Many are the motives inviting you to this noble work. Let me mention some few of them.

First motive: Our churches are houses of God and of our

Patron Saint. When you expect a visit from a friend or from some distinguished person, you prepare your house for them. Now the Son of God himself dwells in our midst, in the Blessed Sacrament, the King of kings whose throne is in heaven. God demanded for his house at Jerusalem gold, silver and precious stones. In compliance with this demand David held in readiness, "of gold a hundred thousand talents, and of silver a million of talents." (One talent having been estimated at from \$1645 to \$1916). And as if it were too little, he added that in his *poverty* he had prepared this sum. I Par. xxii, 14. He assigns as cause of this extensive preparation: "For a house is prepared not for man, but for God." 150,000 workmen were employed in building the temple.

Following David's example, our Christian forefathers built precious churches in great numbers, which were so many monuments of their vivid faith.

It is sad to witness that there are many who build for themselves costly dwelling-houses, and have them luxuriously furnished, whilst they neglect the house of their God, its altars, sacred vessels, and vestments. David was instigated by the thought, "I dwell in a house of cedar; and the ark of the covenant of our Lord is under skins" (I Par. xvii, 1) to build a temple for the Lord. The Prophet Aggeus also complains of the house of the Lord being neglected, saying: "Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house lie desolate?" God punished the Israelites for this negligence. "You have looked for more, and behold, it became less; and you brought it home, and I blowed it away. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because my house is desolate, and you make haste every man to his own house. Therefore the heavens over you were stayed from giving dew; and the earth was hindered from yielding her fruits, etc." Aggeus chapter i.

Second motive: God regards the condition our churches are in as a measure of our love for him, and of our godliness. It has always been considered a good sign of a state, when the houses belonging to the commonwealth are kept in good repair.

When a person cultivates his garden carefully, it is a good proof that he finds a great delight in it. You understand then very well, why God will judge, from your liberality towards the church, whether you love him sincerely. For this end, he leaves the sum of your contribution entirely to your own free choice. We see this from the words spoken by Nathan to David: "Did I ever speak to anyone of all the judges of Israel, whom I charged to feed my people, saying: Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" I Par. xvii, 6. True, God ordered (Exodus xxv) a collection to be made, but added distinctly, that nothing was to be taken except 'of every man that offereth of his own accord.' For the Lord desired to see, how much every man was willing to do for his name. He intimated the same intention, when according to St. Mark (xii, 41), "sitting over against the treasury, he beheld how the people cast money into the treasury." Jesus, who dwells incessantly in our churches, still beholds how much money Christians cast into the treasury.

We read Exodus xxxv that all the multitude of the children of Israel offered to the Lord, with a most ready and devout mind, whatever precious things they had, bracelets, and ear-rings, rings, tablets, etc., whilst "the skillful women also gave such things as they had spun." They brought such precious things, in so great quantities, that Moses forbade them to offer up any more. I wish to God I had reason to make the same complaint, as Moses made.

Third motive: It is oftentimes better to give alms for the benefit of your church than for the relief of the poor.

St. Chrysostom said once: "If you have any thing to spare for the poor, give it to this poor church." Such alms are given directly to Jesus, who is very poor, under the form of bread. If we leave Jesus in his poverty in the tabernacle, we cannot dare say at the Last Judgment: "When did we see thee a stranger or naked, or in prison, and did not minister to thee?"

Therefore all those who abhor the adornment of our churches are of one mind with Judas who complained of the "waste" (Mt. xxi, 8).

I have no doubt that many of you have often thought : Oh : had I but lived at the time of my Lord's sojourn on earth, I would have been to him as hospitable as Lazarus, or Mary and Martha. Well, be hospitable to him now. You know by faith that he dwells day and night in our midst.

In this kind of devotion women have ever been distinguished. (The pious women at the sepulchre of Jesus. St. Helena mother of Constantine.) For what other reason does the Holy Church pray in a special manner "for the devout female sex?"

Fourth motive: The reward is exceeding great.

The avaricious man regards as lost whatever he gives to the poor and to the churches. This is a pernicious error. Almsgiving is often rewarded even on earth; and surely "recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just." Lk. xiv, 14.

St. Otto bishop of Bamberg who founded fifteen monasteries and seminaries, used to say, the more I have given to God, the richer I have become. We read in the lives of many Saints that they obtained extraordinary graces in answer to fervent prayers with almsgiving. Moreover, "those incessant prayers, which are said in the church, are for you; the praises and Holy Communions are for you; the sacrifice offered every Sunday for you." St. Chrysostom.

At the hour of your death, and at the Judgment, you will meet as your patrons all those Saints whose churches you helped to establish or adorn. If the Jews recommended to Jesus the centurion who had built them a synagogue, saying: "He is worthy that thou shouldst do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue" (Lk. vii, 4, 5) why should not the Saints recommend you to God, when you have built and adorned churches to his glory and in their honor? And as Jesus appeared in the cloak of St. Martin, saying, With this cloak Martin has covered me, so he and his Saints will show to the whole world the vessels and vestments which you have presented to them. When you reach heaven, your reward will increase as long as the name of God is praised in this church.

Peroration: He that deposits his talents in this bank, acts prudently, and will have them restored with high interest. When Moses exhorted the people to contribute for the tabernacle of the Lord, he said: "He that is wise amongst you, let him come and do what the Lord has commanded." O that all of you would follow this advice!

M. Faber.

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

THREE DAILY ENEMIES.

Why is it that the Gospel on the destruction of Jerusalem, which in point of time appertains to the Monday before Holy Week, is read in this month? Because the ninth Sunday after Pentecost generally falls in August, in which month the prophecy of Jesus (Lk. xix, 43, 44) was fulfilled. Then were the days of horror; Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed on the second day of September. By the light of these avenging flames the Church shows us the abyss of suffering into which men are thrown through levity, false security, and obduracy. Would, O Christian soul! that thou couldst be induced by the tears of Jesus, and by the sad fate of Jerusalem, to combat daily against these three enemies!

I. LEVITY.

1. *No one should think himself free from it.*

a. Man is inconstant in consequence of his corrupt nature, which turns him from God. Ever since the primitive natural order in man was perverted by sin, he is greatly dependent on changeable physical conditions which exercise a great influence on his soul.

b. This inconstancy is the more dangerous, because, through its being the normal condition of men, it is scarcely noticed.

2. *This levity is manifested:*

a. As inconstancy of the will, which veers from one extreme to the other. A striking example is Jerusalem. To-day the inhabitants of Jerusalem cried: "Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" To-morrow the same people cried out: "Crucify him, crucify him!" We witness similar inconstancy of will every day.

b. As an attempt to counteract important truths, which a man given to levity strives to banish from his mind, or the ex-

acting demands of which he paralyzes by excuses and wordy evasions. V. g. the shortness of temporal life, the dreadful final judgment, the severe demands of the Gospel.

c. As practical levity. A man given to levity contents himself with fulfilling the conditions of salvation in a superficial manner, as observing the letter of the commandments, receiving the Holy Sacraments, doing penance and giving satisfaction. He regards the salvation of his soul as an easy task, deferring the most necessary duties to a doubtful future.

Who does not see the dangerous nature of this common vice? Therefore :

3. *Combat against it incessantly.*

The weapons are as follows :

a. Fervent prayer. "Renew a right spirit within my bowels. Strengthen me with a perfect spirit." Ps. L. Only God's hand can hold the reed continually shaken with the wind.

b. Detachment from all things that may distract, dull and enervate your mind, especially by abstaining from forbidden, or from too many, sensual pleasures, or from conversing with such as are given to levity in word and deed. This evil being contagious, you must keep out of the infected neighborhood.

c. Constant occupation of the body which should accomplish the daily task of life with a good intention often repeated. It is only in a mortified body that the soul gains strength. And constant occupation of our mind, which should often meditate on death, judgment, hell, heaven, etc. Frequent examination of conscience, acts of contrition, resolutions.

II. FALSE SECURITY.

1. *Man is deceived by security against sin, and by security in spite of sin.*

a. Security against sin. This security is the fruit of foolish self-delusion. Men of this kind consider themselves strong enough to overcome the temptations which they wilfully cause themselves. Or it is the fruit of intentional self-delusion regarding the proximate occasions of sin. They pretend not to

see the danger, in order to indulge in their cherished passion. They shall have no peace; "but the sword reacheth even to the soul." Jerem. iv, 10.

b. Security in spite of sin. Jerusalem slept, when upon the brink of ruin, easy and secure. So also the reckless sinner neither repents of his sins, nor entertains any fear of the consequences and punishments of sin. The number of his years increases, and security increases with them. He hopes for final conversion, but does everything to prevent it.

2. *Certain ruin is the necessary consequence of such perversity.*

"After days and a year, you that are confident, shall be troubled; for the vintage is at an end, the gathering shall come no more." Isai. xxxii, 20.

a. This is self-evident. You cannot expect of a just God to work the greatest miracles of grace on those who do not care for their own salvation, but who, by their conduct, constantly despise the Most High. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked." Gal. vi, 7. "You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions. I also will laugh in your destruction; and will mock, when that shall come to you which you feared," etc. Prov. i, 25, 33.

b. History and experience bear witness. "As in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not, till the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Mt. xxiv, 38. Think of David's fall, of the punishment of Core and his accomplices (Numb. xvi, 23); of King Baltassar (Dan. v), of Dives (Lk. xii, 19). Do we not witness hundreds of similar incidents within our own acquaintance, illustrative of the folly and ruin of false security?

3. *Incessant combat against it is necessary.*

a. Protect yourself against this false security by recollecting your own weakness, which you know by sad experience; by meditating on the uncertainty of the hour of certain death, and on the horror of death in sin.

b. Protect yourself by remembering the divine warnings to cultivate solicitude and penance.

These warnings are afforded by the above examples; as well as by texts of Holy Scripture, such as: "Let him, that thinketh himself to stand, take heed lest he fall." I Cor. x, 12. "You know perfectly, that the day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night." I Thess. v, 2. Moreover, the many casualties which are daily occurring, should be a warning for every one of us.

III. OBDURACY.

One who has been given to levity for a considerable length of time, will, in most cases, become a hardened, obdurate, sinner.

1. *A dreadful state of the soul.*

a. By its very nature. It is the state of the devil. There is scarcely a remedy left to heal it. If things prosper with the obdurate sinner, it occasions sin instead of gratitude. Misfortune causes furious obstinacy instead of humility. Warnings, threatenings, and punishments, are in vain.

Examples: Pharaoh. After the performance of the many miracles, so that even the magicians said to him, "This is the finger of God," his heart remained hardened (Exod. viii, 19), so that he said: "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord." Judas, on whom neither the tenderest charity, nor the most severe threatenings, had any effect. The Jews, in spite of the many miracles wrought by Jesus, in spite of all his tenderest affections, cried out: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children!"

b. On account of its final result. Pharaoh was buried in the waves of the sea. Judas went out and hanged himself. Jerusalem was destroyed. A dreadful and a painful eternity is awaiting the obdurate sinner.

2. *Be it our daily effort to guard ourselves against obduracy.*

a. To help us in this we have divine inspirations, such as

the voice of conscience, warnings by our friends, etc. Continued disobedience leads to obduracy.

b. Whenever you fall, hasten to make an act of perfect contrition; hasten to the confessional. A heart carrying within itself sin for a considerable length of time, will be alienated from God, perhaps for ever.

c. Avoid relapsing into sin. In consequence of frequent relapses you become familiar with vice, you grow indifferent, feel something like a want of sinning, the last consequence of which is contempt of the divine commandments, and hatred of God himself.

Peroration: May God grant you zeal, courage, and strength in combatting these three enemies, lest your final fate be similar to the fate of Jerusalem.

Sanchez Sobrino.

IV.

WHOLESOME TEARS.

It is not to all tears nor to every sorrow that the word of Jesus can be applied: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Whilst many tears are useless, there are in addition to those caused by the sorrow of persecution, two kinds of tears, especially, which will be turned into eternal joy.

PART I.

TEARS SHED FOR OUR PAST LIFE.

I. These are *just* tears, as we have all of us sufficient reason to shed them freely, because it is by sin that we

1. Grievously offended God, who is

a. Infinite bounty in himself, and

b. Infinitely bountiful towards us, so that the loss of all earthly goods, in comparison with offending God, is a mere nothing. "Know thou and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God." Jerem. ii, 4.

2. Because by sin we deserved eternal condemnation.

II. *Wholesome* tears, since they recover God's grace for us.

1. God himself gives us the assurance. "When thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him; yet so, if thou shalt seek him with all thy soul." Deut. iv, 29.

2. It is confirmed by the example of the penitents. David, Peter, Magdalen, etc.

III. *Becoming* tears.

1. We have offended God, because seduced by delights of the flesh and the world, wherefore it is becoming to propitiate God by the grief of tears.

2. We mingle our tears with the tears of Christ, who, for our propitiation, shed the most painful tears, "offering up prayers and supplications with a strong cry and tears." Heb. v, 7.

Poor sinner, shed such tears of repentance over your past life, and you may say with David: "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into joy; thou hast cut my sackcloth, and hast compassed me with gladness." Ps. xxix, 12.

PART II.

TEARS CAUSED BY A DESIRE FOR FUTURE HAPPINESS.

After the tears of penance are wiped off, the tears of desire will flow so much the more freely, the more the converted soul becomes convinced of the happiness of beholding and of possessing God. Thus penitent David ejaculated: "Wo is me, that my sojourning is prolonged." Ps. cxix, 5.

I. We have sufficient reason for shedding such tears; for remembering celestial Jerusalem, we sigh with exiled Israel: "Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept; when we remembered Sion." Ps. cxxxvi, 1. "Hope that is deferred afflicteth the soul." Prov. xiii, 12.

II. Such tears are wholesome, for

1. They render us cautious to abstain from everything that might exclude us from heaven.

2. They animate us to do all that might obtain and facilitate the possession of the celestial happiness, viz.:

- a. To keep God's commandments,
- b. To perform acts of Christian perfection.

III. Such are happy tears. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Mt. v, 5. These tears are turned

1. Into the sweetest comfort in death;
2. Into unlimited triumph after death.

Peroration: As the brooks are not detained by the flowery fields through which they take their course, but incessantly flow towards the ocean; and as the flame tends upward, so our longing and tending should be directed towards God only. Let us shed tears for our sins, and for the delay of our heavenly happiness; they will not drop on the ground in vain, like those shed for earthly goods, they are wholesome to us, and agreeable to God. "Thou hast set my tears in thy sight." Ps. lv, 9.

C. M. Gabrielli.

Tenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

DIVINE MERCY.

“I say, this man went down to his house justified.” Lk. xviii, 14. How kind is our Lord towards an humbled and contrite heart! A great sinner, a publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. And the effect of this prayer of a penitent sinner? The most enviable. Jesus remarked: “This man went down to his house justified.” Divine mercy is the star mildly and friendly shining into the night of the sinner, not suffering him to perish in the waves of despair. Let us meditate on the wonderful mercy of God that wrought so many miracles of grace, and for this end let us reflect on the following points:

- I. What is the evidence of divine mercy?
- II. How far does it extend?
- III. To whom is mercy granted?

I. THE EVIDENCES OF DIVINE MERCY.

It is proved:

1. *By God's assertions.*

There is no subject so frequent in Holy Scripture as the extolling of divine mercy. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; and why will you die, O house of Israel?” Ezech. xxxiii, 11. “If the wicked do penance for all his sins * * * living he shall live, and shall not die.” xviii, 21. “My people being converted, I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins.” II Par. vii, 14. “If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool.” Isai. i, 18. “I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance.”

2. *By God's deeds.*a. *By his work of Redemption.*

God being desirous of lifting up the fallen human race, gave his Son. "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." John iii, 16. He gave him up to the most ignominious death. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.'" Gal. 13.

b. *By the foundation of his Church.*

God has founded the Church to impart, through her, to men his mercies and to cleanse the hearts of sinners. For this end, he gave her the fullness of power. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." John xx, 22. "Whatever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." Mt. xviii, 18.

Such are the solid pillars on which divine mercy is founded. Who would yet doubt it?

II. TO WHOM IS MERCY GRANTED?

Divine mercy is infinite. "We cannot explain it by words, nor comprehend it by reflection. It surpasses our understanding." St. Chrysostom. Divine Mercy extends:

1. *To all sinners.*

God offers forgiveness to everyone. "His tender mercies are over all his works." Ps. cxliv, 9. "The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord." Ps. xxxii, 5. In Holy Scripture we see, from very consoling instances, that the benign heart of God is opened to all mankind. Adam and Eve; Gen. iii, 15; David; II Kings xii, 13; Ninive; Jonas ii; Mary Magdalen; Lk. vii, 47; Zacheus; Lk. xix, 2; the penitent thief. Lk. xxiii, 43; Peter; John xix, 15. "Do not say, 'I am a blasphemer, a persecutor, I am impure.' You can see all these in the Old and New Testament, in Old David, in Young Paul. Offer no excuses. You have sinned. Repent of it, and do penance. You have sinned a thousand times. Repent of it, and do penance a thousand

times * * * What is sin after all, when compared with Divine Mercy? A spider's web. The wind blows, and the web is seen no longer." St. Chrysostom.

2. To all *sins*.

Divine Mercy is not limited

a. By the *number* of sins. "I will not remember *all* his iniquities that he hath done." How many sins may Mary Magdalene have committed! Yet, she heard the acceptable word, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Lk. vii, 48.

b. Nor by the *enormity* of sins. "If my people do penance for their most wicked ways, I will forgive their sins." Par. vii, 14. How grievous were the sins of David, of Peter, of Saul! Even Judas would have obtained mercy, if he had done penance.

c. Nor by the *duration* of sins. "Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life." Ps. xxii, 6. The thief had spent his life in crimes. Yet the Lord said to him: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Therefore if your life be an uninterrupted chain of evil, be not despondent with Cain, saying: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon" (Gen. iv, 13); but flee into the embrace of your Heavenly Father; he is willing to forgive.

III. TO WHOM IS MERCY GRANTED?

1. *Not to the impenitent sinner.*

Penance is the indispensable condition of remission. "Be penitent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Act. iii, 19. Jesus said to the impenitent Jews: "You shall die in your sin." John viii, 21. Cain, Saul, Judas did no penance, and their sins were not forgiven.

2. *But to the penitent sinner.*

We must a. repent of our sins. "Rend your hearts." Joel ii, 13. The contrition must be supernatural.

We must b. confess our sins. The ordinary means instituted by God for the remission of sins, is confession.

We must c. amend our lives. "Make your ways and your doings good." Jerem. vii, 3. You ought to become a new man.

Let the avaricious sinner become liberal ; the wrathful, gentle ; the impure, modest ; the slothful, zealous.

Peroration : You know the conditions under which God promised to be propitious to us. "Do penance, and God will blot out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sin as a mist." Isai. xliv, 22.

Joseph Schuen.

IV.

HUMILITY OF PRAYER.

"The publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven, but struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Lk. xviii, 13. Two men went up into the temple to pray. Both had the same intention, both prayed to the same God, and at the same time. Yet, how widely different was the success of their prayer! The publican found grace, and went down to his house a child of God. The Pharisee found no grace, no hearing, but offending God by his prayer, went down to his house a greater sinner than he had entered the temple. What is the explanation? The publican humbled himself, he prayed with humility, and was heard and exalted; the Pharisee exalted himself, prayed with pride, and was not heard, but rejected. By this parable our Saviour exhorted us to pray with humility. Let then this indispensable condition of prayer be the subject of our present meditation.

I.

When do we pray with humility?

We may learn this from the publican. "The publican, standing afar off, would not as much as lift his eyes toward heaven, but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." (1) The publican is fully aware whom he addresses—the *divine majesty*—and how poor a creature he is himself, not being worthy to approach God; therefore he stands afar off. (2) He knows that God is *infinitely holy*, and detests sin.

He is conscious of his being a great sinner, and in consequence abominable in the eyes of God. Therefore he "would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven." (3) He has reflected on the severity of divine justice in the punishment of the sinner, and knows that he himself, being a great sinner, deserves no grace, but only severe punishment. Therefore he "struck his breast, saying: O God be merciful to me, a sinner." He puts all his confidence in the divine mercy.

You, consequently, pray with humility, if you acknowledge the infinite majesty of God and your own misery, saying with Abraham: "I will speak to my Lord, whereas I am dust and ashes." Gen. xviii, 27. You pray with humility, if you pray with a sincere acknowledgment of the infinite sanctity and justice of God, and of your own sinfulness and unworthiness, saying: "I am not worthy that thou shouldst look down upon me; but through thy infinite mercy and the merits of thy Son be propitious to me, and grant me this grace for which I implore thee." Cf. the beautiful prayer of Daniel (Dan. ix, 4-20).

The Pharisee is the representative of all those who do not pray with humility. He did not acknowledge God's awful majesty, sanctity and justice, nor his own misery and sinfulness. Whatever good he did, he ascribed to his own exertions; he had a high opinion of himself, and a very low opinion of others. Examine yourself, whether you be of one spirit with him.

II.

Why must we be humble in our prayers?

1. *God demands* that we should pray with humility, as he clearly shows by the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. In the Old Testament he said: "To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit?" Isai. lxvi, 2. He promised: "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." Ecclus. xxxi, 21. And St. James the Apostle writes: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." James iv, 6.

God invariably hears and answers the prayer of an humble

heart. He more than granted the petition of the centurion who interceded for his sick servant, and did not deem himself worthy that the Lord should enter under his roof. He heard the prayer of the woman at Chanaan, who was not deterred by his seemingly harsh answer.

How right then was that great servant of God who confessed, that after forty years' studying he had found no more effective manner of prayer than by presenting himself before God as a blind beggar-child, and imploring his mercy.

2. *Reason itself* teaches the same. If the beggar comes to you in an humble attitude, pointing to his torn clothes, and to his bodily defects, and asks you for aid, you are easily moved with compassion. But if a proud beggar comes to you, you turn your face from him with disgust. Make the application to yourself who are a beggar in your relation to God. Besides, by granting the petition of the proud man, God would increase his pride, wherefore it is self-evident that he resists the proud.

Moreover, the proud man does not fulfill the other conditions of a good prayer: he does not pray in the name of Jesus, since he relies on his own merits. Nor does he pray with devotion, or confidence in God, or with perseverance; whilst the humble Christian complies with all these conditions.

III.

What are we to do in order to learn to pray with humility?

An humble prayer can only ascend from an humble heart. Therefore endeavor to become humble of heart, by employing the following means:

1. Being convinced that humility is a grace of God, pray to him that he may give you this beautiful virtue. Meditate often on the humility of our Saviour and his blessed Mother, and implore Jesus to grant you the virtue whose cultivation he inculcates on us so urgently.

2. Call frequently to your mind what you are in real truth.

a. What is your single self in comparison with the more than one thousand millions of men? You seem to disappear in

the prodigious multitude. All these men collectively are in intellect, power, and glory, far inferior to one holy angel. If you now consider that there are millions and millions of holy angels, how little must you appear in your own eyes? And all these millions of angels are, when compared with God, a mere nothing.

b. What are you relative to your body? Dust and ashes; the food of worms.

c. What are you relative to your soul? True, your soul is the image and likeness of God; but what have you made of this divine image by your sins of the past, and of the present? And as to the future, when you reflect on your past sins, have you not every reason to tremble before the severe judgment of God?

3. When you approach God in prayer, call to your mind, who is God in all his splendor and majesty; and who you are:—a wretched sinner, a beggar sunk into the greatest misery, a culprit sentenced to death. And, then, overwhelmed with the burden of your misery, speak from the depth of your heart to Him who alone is able to deliver you. And if you are troubled with distractions during your prayer, humble yourself again before your Lord and Master, and implore him that he may not suffer you to commit new sins by negligence; but cease not praying in spite of distractions, and your prayer will be acceptable to the Lord.

Peroration: Examine your conscience, whether you have prayed heretofore with humility; whether you appeared before God as a sinner, a beggar, etc. Let us pray for the grace of humility; let us strive earnestly to obtain this beautiful virtue. Let us make a beginning at once, at this hour of Holy Mass.

J. Schmitt.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

III.

PARALLEL BETWEEN THE LIVES OF JESUS AND MARY.

“Thou art beautiful above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad in thy lips; therefore hath God blessed thee for ever.” Ps. xliv, 3. God made Adam a help like unto himself. When the Son of God descended from heaven to become the second Adam, he had already created the second Eve, whom he had chosen to be his mother. And as the second Eve, the good mother of mankind, it was becoming that she should be like unto the second Adam, her Son. And indeed we discover a great similarity between Jesus and Mary, so that we may apply to her eminently the words of the Holy Ghost: “Whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son.” Rom. viii, 29. As this festival day presents to our eyes the summit and consummation of this similarity, I am to remind you of the parallel features in the life of Jesus and Mary.

I. The first resemblance is the *similarity in their external appearance*. According to the records of the ancient historians Jesus and Mary were the very pictures of beauty. Nicephorus, a historian of the first ages, describes the countenance of our Saviour as the ideal of beauty, adding: “He resembled, perfectly, in all things, the holy and immaculate Mother of God.” Hist. eccl. cap. 40. Could it be otherwise? If the Son of God chose one of the daughters of Eve his mother, he no doubt endowed her with such bodily perfections, that he, the ideal man, could bear her features. And her features he assuredly would bear, since he chose her for his mother. Besides it is but natural that all bodily imperfections which are the consequence of sin, should be unknown to her who was conceived and lived without sin. The words applied to Jesus are in consequence justly

applied to his Blessed Mother also, the words of the Holy Ghost: "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in thy lips; therefore hath God blessed thee for ever."

II. From all eternity Jesus was *predestinated to be the redeemer of mankind*. You are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled, fore-known, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but manifested in the last times for you." I Pet. i, 19, 20; Eph. i, 4, 5. This decree of mercy was made known after the fall of our first parents. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Gen. iii, 15. From that day, all mankind was longing for the Son of the woman, this hope being the star shining in the night of paganism.

But do you not see that, as Jesus was predestinated from all eternity the Redeemer of mankind, so Mary was also from all eternity predestinated to be his mother, and, as such, his co-operator in the work of redemption? Or can we conceive the idea of Son without the idea of Mother? Accordingly the Holy Church applies the words spoken by the Holy Ghost with regard to the Son of God, as the first-born of creation, also to the Blessed Virgin, who was chosen from all eternity, as mother of the Son of God, to help in carrying out the plan of redemption. "From the beginning and before the world was I created; and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be; and in the holy dwelling-place I have ministered before him," etc. Eccclus. xxiv, 14-16.

III. It is for this reason that the *nations looked forward* to the coming of the privileged woman, because they expected with ardent expectation the coming of her Son. What Holy Scripture says of the woman crushing the head of the Serpent, is repeated, although mixed up with grotesque legends, in the myths and traditions of the nations. The Greeks and Romans call the great Deliverer, the son of a God, springing forth from his union with a daughter of the earth. According to Egyptian tradition, the evil spirit will be crushed by Isis and her son Horus. By

numerous pictures found in Egypt, a mother with her child is represented. We meet the same conception amongst the Indians, Persians, Chinese, and in the Teutonic myths.

The prophets speak in unmistakable terms of the mother that was to bring forth the Redeemer. The Prophet Isaias (vii, 14) mentions the great sign that is to be given to the house of David: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel." And Jeremias (xxxii, 22) exclaims in astonishment: "The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: a woman shall compass a man."

IV. We admire the same similarity in the *conception and birth* of Mother and Son.

The Son of God, when descending upon earth, appeared without sin and imperfection. "For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as other priests, to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's." Heb. vii, 26.

His Blessed Mother was also conceived and born without sin, growing as a lily among thorns on the sinful soil of this earth. The only-begotten Son of God and his holy Mother are the only pure and holy blossoms on the tree of mankind, holiness belonging to the Son by nature, to the Mother by grace.

V. If we consider the *life and virtues* of Jesus and Mary, we see that both in their youth led a life of solitude and retirement, and, after the gracious birth of the Lord, Mother and Son were inseparably united: in Egypt, in Nazareth, in public life, when Jesus was accompanied by Mary; and even on the cross, when the Mother stood at the foot thereof.

As for virtues, both were conspicuous by their *humility*, manifested by poverty—Jesus the King, and Mary a king's daughter—and by their *submission* to the will of God. Both burned with *charity* for all men (the wedding at Cana, the maternal care of John and the other Apostles). Both, the king and the queen of martyrs, excelled them all in *patience* and *endurance*. Their greatest glory was *purity* and *holiness*. Mary

could have said in the words of Jesus: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" John viii, 46. The Council of Trent (Sess. vi, can. 23) teaches that Mary never committed even a venial sin. God is in her midst, she shall not be moved, we may say of her in the words of the Psalmist. She did not know the discord between spirit and body, which is the consequence of sin.

VI. This life was terminated by a *similar death*.

The death of our Saviour was a death from love. "He was wounded for our iniquities; he was bruised for our sins. He was offered, because it was his own will." Isai. liii. The death of Mary was also a death from love; the flame of life being extinguished in her earthly frame from ardent longing for her beloved Child.

Jesus was laid in the sepulchre, and the third day rose again to life. The sacred body of the Mother of God, after having been in the sepulchre for three days, was joined by her glorious soul, and rose also to life again. "If Christ preserved his Mother from every blemish of sin, why should he not have preserved her from the ignominy of corruption?" St. Augustine. The tabernacle of the living, from which the Son of God took his own flesh, could never be a prey to vermin. To doubt it would be the greatest temerity, as Benedict XIV says.

VII. Glorious was the *triumphal entry* of the Son of God into his heavenly kingdom, the holy souls of the Old Covenant being his escort, and the angels of heaven meeting him in celestial joy.

What should prevent us from speaking of a similar entry of the Mother of God into the kingdom of her Son? The Saints and angels met the valiant woman who crushed the Serpent's head. The Father received his daughter, the Son his mother, the Holy Ghost his spouse; the most blessed Trinity enthroned her as the queen of heaven.

Peroration: We are "also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born amongst many brethren." Rom. viii, 29. The more we copy the life of Jesus in our own lives, the greater will be our perfec

tion, and the greater our reward in heaven. Let us then strive for a resemblance to our first-born Brother, and to our Mother, in obedience, and humility, in charity, and patience, in justice, and holiness, and all virtues. Then our death will resemble their death, and our entry into heaven will resemble theirs.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

THE LIFE OF MARY BOTH A CONTEMPLATIVE AND AN ACTIVE LIFE.

The Day of Assumption is the greatest of all the festivals celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Gospel, I have read to you, is quite suitable for the occasion. For, as our Saviour chose figures and parables to represent to our eyes the sublimest doctrines, so the Holy Church shows us in the character of two sisters, as if in a picture, the greatness of the Blessed Virgin. Let us, with this end in view, meditate on the Gospel.

I. THE RECEPTION OF JESUS.

1. *Martha received him into her house.* Martha, to whom by birthright the house of Bethania belonged, took a great delight in receiving the Lord under her roof. How kind were Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus to Jesus; and how kind was Jesus to them! The spirit of peace was reigning in this household.

2. *Mary received Jesus into her womb.*

a. Jesus was in *Mary's womb*. If it was the source of great joy and happiness to Martha to receive the Lord into her house, and to wait on him, what shall we say, then, of the Mother of God? "To say of Mary that she is the Mother of God, is to say whatever is great and sublime." St. Anselm.

b. Jesus was in *Mary's hands*. She laid him in the manger, carried him into Egypt, led him into the temple; and when Joseph and Nicodemus took him down from the cross, they

placed him in the arms of his afflicted Mother, who received him with unutterable tenderness, and pressed him to her bosom.

c. Jesus was never separated from the flesh he had taken from Mary. His Godhead remains inseparably united with his human nature in one person.

3. *The Christian receives Jesus into his heart*, viz. heart,

a. Whenever he hears and keeps the *word of God*. "If any one love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make an abode with him." John xiv, 23.

b. In a literal sense, whenever he receives *Holy Communion*. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." John vi, 57. This grace is quite similar to the grace of conceiving Jesus in her womb conceded to Mary.

II. THE WAITING ON JESUS.

Jesus is waited on

1. *By the two sisters*. "Martha and Mary were two sisters; both served the Lord with the same sincere and affectionate heart." St. Augustine. The one was anxious to please him by the active, the other by the contemplative, life.

2. *By his Mother, Mary*. She served Jesus in both the ways, each of which was peculiar to either sister.

a. By an *active* life. Being espoused to Joseph, who earned a livelihood by hard work, she had, of course, to do the domestic work. Besides, she had to comply with her duties as Mother of Jesus. She went into the mountainous country with haste, to visit her cousin Elizabeth. She traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, fled into Egypt, etc.

b. By a *contemplative* life. Although active as Martha, she was absorbed in prayer and contemplation, like Mary. Although a handmaid of the Lord, waiting on him, she was at the same time the Mother of Jesus, never leaving him, and standing at his feet when he was nailed upon the Cross.

3. *By every just soul*. The Christian living in the world must perform the task of both Mary and Martha. He must serve God by both the active and contemplative lives. Hence

the necessity of daily prayer, of Sundays and Holidays. "If we cannot sit with Mary at the Lord's feet to hear his word, we must stand upright with Martha and do our work, at the same time, however, calling to our minds the presence of God, and never losing sight of him." St. Augustine. "As it is difficult to avoid distraction, when you are always implicated in worldly affairs, you should at least set apart a few hours of the day, or a few days of the year, to enter in yourself." St. Leo.

III. THE DECISION GIVEN BY JESUS.

1. *Respecting the active life.* Martha had no doubt that her complaints against her sister were well-founded, and that the Lord would decide against her. But the Lord decided in favor of Mary and reproached Martha. Why?

a. Martha was too anxious in her care of Jesus at the cost of the spiritual good of her soul. "Be not solicitous, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? * * * Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Mt. vi, 31-33.

b. Martha took too great pains. The Lord does not approve of our being absorbed in temporal things, so as to neglect the one thing necessary. "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mt. xvi, 26.

2. *Respecting the contemplative life.* "Martha grieves at Mary, and Mary instead of answering her sister, leaves the cause for decision to Jesus, who defends her indeed!" St. Augustine. Jesus gives his decision, as follows:

a. "Mary hath chosen the best part," because it is incomparably better to give yourself entirely up to God, and to be united with him in charity, than to have your heart divided between divine and earthly things. Therefore the Apostle says: "The virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married thinketh on things of the world, how she may please her husband." I Cor. vii, 34.

b. The part which Mary hath chosen "shall not be taken away from her." "There is this difference between the active and

contemplative life, that Martha's occupation is not continued in heaven, because there is no stranger whom you may take in; no poor man, whom you may give to eat; no sick person, whom you may visit; no dead man, whom you may bury." St. Augustine. Whereas Mary's occupation will be continued for all eternity, because it consists in the contemplation of infinite perfection, in the love, and fruition, of God!

3. *Respecting the active and contemplative life united.* Mary the Mother of Jesus performed the occupation of Martha and her sister in the most perfect manner. On this glorious day, Jesus gives his decision as to the value of this union.

a. For her bodily services she receives a reward which was never bestowed on a creature: she rises gloriously from death, and is in the kingdom of heaven exalted above all the choirs of angels. A similar reward will be imparted to all who lead an active life in the service of Jesus. "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom. * * * For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat," etc. Mt. xxv, 34 ff. "Be not sorry that you were born at a time when you cannot behold the Lord visible in his flesh. He is willing to comply with your wish, wherefore he says: 'As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.'" St. Augustine.

b. For her charity she receives its everlasting continuance, and return of love. She continues the occupation in heaven, which she commenced on earth; she continues to behold God, to serve him, and to find his happiness in his love and vision. Jesus has promised the same reward to all those who love him. "If I shall go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you also may be." John xiv, 3.

Peroration: Such is the service, such is the reward of Mary! As her services were far superior to those of the two sisters, so her reward in heaven is incomparably greater; as queen of heaven and earth she stands next to the throne of God. And being so near to God, who is the sinner that, through her intercession, may not find forgiveness? Where is a child of Adam that may not find salvation through the supplications of this second and true mother of all mankind? Menne.

Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

ON THE MANNER OF SANCTIFYING OUR ACTIONS.

“He hath done all things well.” Zeuxis a celebrated painter once, when reproached by Agatarchus, also a painter, for being too slow in accomplishing his task, gave the remarkable answer: “Thou art painting for time, I am painting for eternity.” What are good works but paintings wherewith we desire to delight the eyes of God, and gain life everlasting? For this reason we must perform all our actions with great zeal: we are painting for God, heaven, eternity. Do not take advice from the friends of the world; they are painting for time, we for eternity. If we, then, begin our actions with zeal, and carry them out with perseverance, the Saints and Angels, nay God himself, will say of us: “He hath done all things well.” Let us, then, investigate the manner of rendering our actions acceptable to God, of sanctifying our daily labors. As the Seraphim seen by the prophet Isaías (vi, 2) had six wings, so our works should have, so to say, six wings also, on which they will certainly soar heavenward.

I. *The first wing is conformity with the will of God.*

Carpenters and masons adjust their work by rule or level. To the Christian, the will of God is rule and level. St. Paul prescribes this rule, saying: “Prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God.” Rom. xii, 2. Jesus is our model: “I do always the things that please my Father.” John viii, 29. St. Magdalene de Pazzis, who endeavored to be a living copy of the life of her divine Master, was wont to exclaim continually “God’s Will!” by which she meant to say: I will when God wills, in the manner in which God wills, because God wills, and when God wills. St. Aloysius declared on his death bed, he felt no remorse for anything he had done, the austerity exercised on his own body not excepted, because all had been

done according to the will of God as interpreted by his Superiors.

II. The *second wing* that carries our actions to heaven is a *good intention*, by which they are referred to God, to please and obey him. This explains why God, who "saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good," did not express his satisfaction with man, when he had made him. The perfection of other creatures (this is the explanation given by St. Ambrose,) is external; the perfection of man is internal, namely the proper intention of all his actions. "As many buildings rest on pillars, and the pillars on the foundation," says St. Gregory, "so our life rests on virtues, and the virtues on our intention in the deepest depth of our souls." If the root of the tree be spoiled, the entire tree will wither away. The root of our tree of life is good intention, that we may say with the spouse: "In our gates are all fruits: the new and the old, my beloved, I have kept for thee." Cant. vii, 13.

You accustom your children to hand to you things with their right hand, not with the left. You call the right the "pretty hand." St. Augustine sees in the left hand the wrong intention, whilst the right represents to him the proper intention. Let us then offer to God all actions with our "pretty hand," with a good intention. St. Paul insists on it, saying: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do; do all things for the glory of God." I Cor. x, 31.

III. To render our works meritorious, it is required in the *third place that love of God should be the motive of our actions*, according to the exhortation of the Apostle: "Let your actions be done in charity." I Cor. xvi, 14. St. Euthymius used to say: "Charity is to virtues what salt is to our food." Good works not performed for the love of God are insipid. The command of the Lord: "Whatsoever sacrifice thou offerest, thou shalt season it with salt" (Levit. ii, 13), is to be observed in a purer, a spiritual sense, by Christians. This was intimated by that venerable, aged mother who, on meeting St. Ivo, said to him, she wished to set paradise on fire, and quench the fire of

hell, that men might do good works only for the love of God, not from hope of reward, nor from the fear of punishment. St. Ivo admired the good intention of the old lady, although expressed in somewhat strange language.

Let not, then, our good works be works of hirelings or servants, but let them proceed from the love of God. When you graft the scentless wild rose, the blossoms will emit a delicious odor. In like manner, all our actions will breath forth the scent of divine charity, if we insert this graft in our hearts.

IV. Our works should be performed with *constant diligence and great accuracy*.

For this purpose, we should perform the task we have on hand, as if we had nothing else to do. It is a common allure-ment of our enemy to entice our minds to subjects which do not at the time properly concern them. So when we pray, he strives to turn our thoughts to our studies, and vice versa. Learn to concentrate your thoughts on the one subject on which it is their duty at any time to be engaged. This golden rule was intimated by Eliseus the prophet, when he sent his servant to lay his staff upon the face of the dead child, saying: "If any man meet thee, salute him not; and if any man salute thee, answer him not." It is intimated by Jesus himself, when, sending his Apostles to preach the Gospel, he said: "Salute no man by the way" (Lk. x, 3), that is, you shall be intent upon the one thing committed to your care, viz.: to preach the Gospel. In like manner, when you pray, attend Holy Mass, make your confession, or hear the word of God, restrain your thoughts from wandering, and if your daily employments should salute you, give them no answer.

Moreover, it is very salutary to carry out the advice given by St. Bernard: "You should always ask yourself, Would you do this, if you had to die this day? Perform all your actions, as if they were the last of your life."

V. Another necessary condition is the union of the virtues of *courage* and *perseverance*, founded on confidence in divine assistance. Moses and Josue are brilliant models, the one

by resisting the perversity of the whole nation, and punishing the wicked without regard to persons; the other, by waging war against hostile nations with so great confidence as to command the sun and moon to stand still. Jos. x, 12. Peter was timid, and broke his promise of faithfulness; John who showed no fear, was protected against Peter's sin. Adam's good will was weak, because he lacked courage.

VI. A very good means of performing our works well is, to call to our mind *the presence of God*, thus performing them under his eyes.

Therefore God said to Abraham: "Walk *before me*, and be perfect." Gen. xvii, 1. St. John (Apoc. iv, 6) saw round about the throne of God four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. This intimates that those who wish to serve God, and to stand before his throne, must be very circumspect in all their actions. Oh! let us never forget that God has his eyes bent upon us in every place. "In his sight we shall persuade our hearts." I John iii, 19. So did St. Francis Xavier who said: "Wherever I be, I will reflect that I am in the theatre of this world, and walk under God's eyes."

Peroration: These are the six wings on which our good works should ascend to heaven. Let us learn then, to do all things well: with a good intention, for the love of God, with zeal and diligence, and with courage, all being done before the eyes of God. Thus we work for heaven, and labor not in vain; thus we paint for eternity, not for time only.

M. Faber.

IV.

INFIRMITIES OF THE SOUL AND THEIR HEALING.

Many were the infirmities of the man whom Jesus healed. He was deaf and dumb; perhaps, judging by Mt. xii, 22, blind also. The infirmities of our soul are no less manifold.

I. THE INFIRMITIES TO WHICH THE SOUL OF THE SINNER IS
SUBJECT.

He that commits a mortal sin, is

1. *Blind.* Sin renders a person blind :

a. The *understanding*. The sinner knows no longer what is for his salvation, and blindfolded runs into his own perdition. This blindness is partly a natural consequence of sin, partly a punishment inflicted by God. "And I will distress men; and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord." Sophonias i, 17.

b. The *heart*, so that the will is intent upon evil only. Therefore the Apostle warns the Christians against walking along the way of the Gentiles, "having the understanding obscured with darkness, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance which is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who despairing have given themselves up to lasciviousness, to the working of all uncleanness, unto covetousness." Eph. iv, 18, 19.

2. *Deaf.* The sinner is so hardened by his sin, that he no longer listens to the warnings of God, which he gives him :

a. From *outside* by his messengers : priests, superiors, extraordinary events. "Hear, ye deaf * * * Who is deaf but he to whom I sent my messengers? * * Thou that hast ears open, wilt thou not hear? The Lord was willing to sanctify him * * * But this is a people that is robbed and wasted." Isai. xlii, 18-22.

b. From *inside*; by the impulses of grace, and by remorse of conscience. But the sinner regards no longer the gnawing worm. "The wicked are alienated * * * Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent; like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers." Ps. lvii, 4-6.

3. *Dumb.* The sinner is so attached to sin as to take no pains to be freed from it.

a. He is silent with regard to the sins of others. Superiors who connive at the sins of their subjects, are called by the Prophet "blind watchmen" and "dumb dogs not able to bark." Isai. lvi, 10.

b. He is silent with regard to *his own sins*, which he does not confess, because he is not willing to forsake them. "For when evil shall be sweet in his mouth, he will hide it under his tongue. He will spare it, and not leave it; and will hide it in his throat." Job xx, 12, 13.

We see the same consequences of the first sin inflicted upon our first parents.

II. CURE OF THESE INFIRMITIES.

1. Conditions of this cure :

a. The *intercession of the Church*, of the Saints, and of the Just in general, is very salutary. The friends of the one deaf and dumb interceded for him also: "they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him."—"He that knoweth his brother to sin a sin which is not unto death, let him ask, and life shall be given to him, that sinneth not to death." I John v, 16.

b. Absolutely necessary is *grace*, which is insinuated by the touching of his ears and tongue. "All need the glory of God, being justified gratis by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Rom. iii, 24.

c. True *penance* is also necessary, to-wit :

True sorrow for our sins, insinuated by Jesus looking up to heaven, and groaning. "I have labored in my groanings, every night I will wash my bed; I will water my couch with my tears." Ps. vi, 7.

Sincere confession in the Sacrament of Penance. "And the string of his tongue was loosed."

Satisfaction, by living up henceforth to the commandments of God and carrying out the demands of the priest. "And immediately his ears were opened." "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief." Heb. xiii, 17.

2. Salutary consequences of conversion.

a. The sinner is *truly healed*, his infirmities being taken away from him. "And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right." How consoling a change! "Return, you rebellious children, and I will heal your rebellions." Jerem. iii, 22.

b. The *honor of God is promoted*, as the sinner who before dishonored God, will now praise him in word and deed, especially by extolling his infinite mercy. "So much the more a great deal did they publish it." So did David: "Deliver me from blood, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall extol thy justice." Ps. L, 16.

c. The *power and bounty* of God are manifested chiefly by the conversion of the sinner. "He hath done all things well." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation." II Cor. i, 3. Cf. Ps. cxxxv.

St. Thomas Aquinas.

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“Who is my neighbor?” Lk. x, 29. A strange question, indeed; unworthy of a lawyer. Even the irrational creatures recognize all creatures of their kind as their neighbors, and live and herd together without regard to color, age, or condition. Birds of a feather flock together. Like loves like. Only man seems not to know it; pride and haughtiness so blinding him that he does not recognize his neighbor. Holy Scripture bears witness to this, saying: “The poor man spoke; and they say: Who is this?”. Ecclus. xiii, 29. So said proud Nabal of David: “Who is David? and what is the Son of Isai?” I Kings xxv, 10. The prophet Habacuc makes the appropriate remark: “As wine deceiveth him that drinketh it, so shall the poor man be.” ii, 5. The drunken man sometimes does not know his own brother. The lawyer mentioned in the Gospel must have been of the same mind. There are, alas! also many of our contemporaries who cannot answer that simple question, Who is my neighbor; and as we cannot enter life everlasting, unless we have given a practical answer to the above question in deed and truth, I will remind all of you who is your neighbor in the several conditions of life.

I. WHO IS NEIGHBOR TO THE RICH MAN?

The poor, who need your assistance, are your neighbors, rich man!

1. If you lend money to two men, one of whom will return you the sum with interest, when the other will never return what belongs to you, which of the two is acting as your neighbor? You say, The one who returns what is mine. Well, if you do favors to your wealthy neighbor, who is able to help himself, you may, perhaps, not find a great reward stored up in heaven, whilst you will find the alms given to the poor

stored up in heaven and multiplied a hundred fold. Therefore Jesus says: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbors who are rich; lest they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the feeble, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just." Lk. xiv, 12. Your rich friends and kinsmen are therefore rather strangers to you: "They shall leave their riches to strangers." Ps. xlviii, 11. The Poor are your true friends.

2. In the Gospel, the Samaritan is declared to be the neighbor to him who fell among the robbers, because he assisted him. Priest and Levite are not called his neighbors, because they did not assist him. Whoever assists you in your misery and distress, is your neighbor. The poor will assist you at the hour of your death and on the day of judgment, when they will "receive you into everlasting dwellings." Lk. xvi, 9. Dives had five brothers, the heirs of his wealth. But as they did not come to his succor, when in hell, they were not his neighbors. Poor Lazarus would have been neighbor to him, if he had been helped, when he lay at his gate, full of sores. Almsgiving would have saved Dives. It is for this reason that St. John the Almsgiver called the Poor his "lords," because through them he hoped to obtain heaven. St. Augustine says that the poor and the rich complete one another, which assertion may be illustrated by those two men, who, being in a dense forest, could not find their way out of the thicket, because the one was blind, and the other lame. In this perplexity the blind man took the lame man upon his shoulders, and thus by the aid of each, both were delivered from their danger. Are not the poor as though they were lame, because they lack the "nervus rerum?" And are not the rich likened to blind men by the Apostle himself, when he says: "They who would become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful

desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition?" I Tim. vi, 9. What then has the blind man to do in order to find a way out of hell? He must take the lame, the poor, upon his shoulders, showing mercy to him. So the poor will be his neighbor indeed.

II. WHO IS NEIGHBOR TO THOSE BEING PROSPEROUS AND EXALTED?

1. Every unhappy man, every poor wretch, he who is friendless and penniless, is your neighbor.

Men are, so to say, tied on a large fortune wheel: He who is the uppermost to-day, will, at the revolving of the wheel, be the undermost. If this be the case, both are certainly neighbors to each other. Convinced of this truth, a favored courtier being once summoned by his royal patron to ask for a new grace, supplicated for a nail to stop the fortune wheel.

If we consult the Gospel, are not the Rich man and Poor Lazarus a picture of the changes of human life? Lazarus desired to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; and no one did give him. Shortly afterward the rich man asks for a drop of water, and receives it not. Lk. xvi. For this reason St. James calls the course of our earthly life the "wheel of our nativity." James iii, 6.

2. If you, man of exalted position, ask me, "Who is my neighbor?" I answer, Every humble man in your vicinity.

When two men start on the same journey, they will be fellow-travelers, although the one gets a little in advance of the other. We all started from the same place, the house of Adam, or if you prefer it, from paradise. And we are still fellow-travelers, though the one may outrun the other. In the book of the generation of Jesus Christ we find in the first place Adam, a tiller of the soil, then the great patriarchs, then the poor shepherd David, and after him great sinners. Then you read of great kings, till you meet St. Joseph, the poor carpenter. The genealogies of the mightiest on earth are remarkable for the same changes. Why are you proud? Do you not fear lest the word of the prophet Zacharias should be verified in you: "Who

art thou, O great mountain? Thou shalt become a plain.” Zach. iv, 7.

III. WHO IS NEIGHBOR TO THE PIOUS CHRISTIAN?

The sinner, however great his crimes may be. The neighbor to him who fell among robbers was a Samaritan, one of those whom the Jews refused to recognize as children of Abraham, nor children of God. If your comrade fell in the battle, because he stood ahead of you in the foremost battle-array, and he carried inferior weapons, did you not say, your next man was killed, and you might have met the same fate? The poor sinner on whom you should show compassion, fell a dreadful fall, because he was perhaps placed in the foremost battle-array, being most exposed to the occasions of sin; and because he was imperfectly armed, having received a less measure of grace. “The life of man upon earth is a warfare.” Job vii, 1. If God had chosen to put you in his place, you might have met the very same fate.

The Prophet Jeremias says: “The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed, because his commiserations have not failed.” And Isaias writes: “Except the Lord had left us seed (i. e., of his grace), we had been as Sodom, and we should have been like to Gomorrha.” Isai. i, 9. This truth induced St. Francis of Assisi to regard himself as the greatest sinner. He used to say: “If highwaymen had received the same graces as were granted to me, they had done more good than I have done.”

Peroration: We all know that all men are our neighbors. Let us then observe the great precept of charity, after the model of Jesus Christ, who loved every one of us unto death, and who will know his disciples by this mark, if they have love for one another.

M. Faber.

IV.

SNARES OF THE DEVIL.

The country between Jerusalem and Jericho, with its many hiding places, was notorious as a lurking place for robbers, who lay in wait for travelers. The arch-robber—the devil—lies in ambush too, when we go down from Jerusalem to Jericho ; i. e., when we start on our journey out of the hands of God, into the world. Let me call your attention to this continual persecution of the devil, so that forewarned, we may take precautions, and so, at the end of our earthly stay, we may be able to exclaim : “Our soul hath been delivered, as a sparrow out of the net of the fowlers.” Ps. cxxiii, 7.

I. THE DEVIL PERSECUTES MAN WHEN HE ENTERS THE WORLD.

When God creates a human soul, she is immortal from the first moment of her existence, and destined by God for everlasting beatitude, which, however, she cannot obtain except by co-operating with divine grace. Satan endeavors to deprive her of divine grace, and to prevent her co-operation with it.

1. *Before birth*, the devil uses all exertions to deprive the child of its life, in order that it may never partake of the eternal beatitude.

a. For this purpose he instigates the father of the child to grieve and abuse his wife.

b. He incites the mother to perilous bodily exertions, as dancing, lifting heavy burdens, etc. Precaution ! Responsibility !

2. *After birth*, Satan attempts to effect that the child may die without baptism. The preacher speaks on the following points :

a. *Necessity of baptism* as the indispensable condition of obtaining celestial vision. Although a child that dies before receiving this first sacrament, will not be condemned to the torments of hell, yet it cannot enjoy the vision of God, to which only children of grace, children of God, are admitted.

b. Enmity of the devil, which is manifested from the very nature of original sin, in consequence of which we are born children of God's wrath and servants of Satan; for which reason exorcism is performed before baptism.

c. Craftiness of the devil, who by his machinations endeavors to postpone the child's baptism, hoping for a premature death. Berthold of Ratisbon rebukes in this place the usage prevalent in the middle ages of inviting a great number of sponsors, the appearance of whom, because retarded in consequence of great distances, deferred the christening of the child for some days. In our days, many parents defer baptism, without *any cause*, not only for days, but even for months.

d. Private baptism in urgent cases. When and how is it administered?

3. *After baptism*, Satan attempts to deprive the child of its baptismal innocence, and to keep it from co-operating with the grace received. As God has chosen an angel to guard the Christian child, so hell sends forth one of its many wicked spirits to ruin it. This devil instigates parents and those belonging to the household,

a. To motions of wrath. How foolish are parents who excite this sleeping passion in a child! And yet there are parents who teach their little children fighting and cursing, to their own amusement, but to the devil's amusement also.

b. To inconsiderate actions, performed in presence of children, which, although not perfectly understood, leave deplorable impressions on their mind.—Children of different sexes should not sleep together.

c. To perilous habits. If you yield to every wish of your children, you will bring them up in wilfulness, lust, and even dishonesty.

d. To the omission of discipline. Punish your child in charity, not when you are in a passion. And then, when, in spite of all your efforts, your children turn out to be a disgrace to you, you may wash your hands in innocence, remembering that Adam had his Cain, Noe his Cham, David his Absalom, etc.

May be that you will yet, in later years, perceive the fruit of your parental solicitude.

II. THE DEVIL PERSECUTES MAN IN HIS PASSAGE THROUGH THE WORLD.

In the history of the war between the Madianites and Israel (Judges vi and vii), we see as in a figure :

1. *How vehemently the evil spirits hate us.* The Madianites "and all their flock came with their tents, and like locusts filled all places, an innumerable multitude of men, and of camels, wasting whatever they touched." Judges vi, 5. This may signify :

a. The machinations of hell to lead men to perdition.
b. The great damage which hell intends to inflict on us by sin.

2. *Who are they who are unfitted to resist ?* God promised to save Israel through Gedeon. Thirty-two thousand men were gathered around him. To show that salvation was not to be hoped for from men, but from Him alone, God proclaimed through Gedeon in the hearing of all: Whosoever is fearful and timorous, let him return. So twenty-two thousand men returned home. Then only three hundred men lapped the water, lifting it with the hands to their mouths. All the rest, numbering about nine thousand seven hundred men, had drunk kneeling; and they were set apart. How few reliable champions did God find in so great a multitude! And how few does he find amongst us! Many are unfit for the spiritual combat, etc.,

a. *Through unfounded fear.* Those twenty-two thousand had no reason to fear, since God himself insured the victory, but they thought only of flight instead of trusting in God. They may signify to us pusillanimous Christians, who have no confidence in God; and vicious Christians, who expect their happiness rather from sin than from God. The proud man abhors humility, because this virtue appears to him too arduous; the avaricious man abhors almsgiving and restitution, as though he feared God could not keep him alive without unjust goods; the lustful man does not believe in the joys of a pure heart, etc.

b. Through false love. Those nine thousand seven hundred who did not drink standing, as it becomes stalwart soldiers, but knelt down towards the water, represent to us those base souls who bow down to the creature, to adore it; entertaining greater affections for the creature than for the Creator. They are a playing ball in the hands of the devil.

3. *How the victory is gained.* The three hundred selected by the Lord, sounded their trumpets in three places round about the camp, and they clapped their pitchers one against another, and they held their lamps in their left hands, whereupon the enemy "howling fled away." In a spiritual sense.

a. Prayer, contrition, and confession, are signified by the sounding of the trumpets, in consequence of which the devil takes to flight.

b. Works of penance are signified by the breaking of the pitchers. As in them the lamps were enclosed, so in our bodies our souls are enclosed. We should also break, so to say, our bodies by mortification, fasting, and alms-giving. By these works the devil is terrified.

c. Piety, as intimated by the burning lamps, first hidden in humility, then shining openly by edifying example to the confusion of the wicked.

III. THE DEVIL PERSECUTES MAN WHEN HE IS TO LEAVE THIS WORLD.

There is no doubt that at the end of life the evil spirit uses every effort to ensnare the departing soul; for "he hath great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." Apoc. xii, 12. Hence the many conjurations of the devil in the *Commendatio animae*. Satan, knowing that without faith and good works we cannot please God, directs his attacks principally

1. Against our faith.

a. We know by experience that Satan frequently persecutes the dying Christian by temptations against faith, this being the shortest way to deprive him of eternal happiness.

b. Remedies: Instruction in our faith in time; frequent

acts of faith; remembrance of the martyrs and other heroes of faith. He who thus strengthens his faith in early life, will preserve a strong heart and mind in the anguish of death also.

2. By reminding the dying Christian of his being void of good works.

a. No doubt that the devil attempts to excruciate the struggling soul by reminding her of good works neglected, of sins committed; and by representing to her her former confessions as sacrilegious, in order to throw her into despair.

b. *Remedies*: Convinced, as you are, of the necessity of good works, strive to perform as many good works as possible, and make your confessions with due preparation, that at the end of your life you may have no reason to be in fear concerning them. Satan dared to approach even St. Martin with temptations of this kind. But the Saint cast him off without difficulty, saying: "Why standest thou here, bloodthirsty beast: thou findest nothing bad in me." When the hour of death approaches, remember your Holy Guardian Angel, who will stand at your side, and collect all your good works. Yet, as these will not be sufficient to give you confidence, lift up confidently the eyes of your soul to the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and to the merits and intercession of the Saints.

Peroration: Let us then be on our guard against the many snares of the devil, that with the Saints we may say at the end of our life: "Our soul hath been delivered, as a sparrow out of the snare of the fowlers." And let us prepare ourselves for our last end by frequent and worthy confession of our sins, that we all may obtain life everlasting, you with me, and I with you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Berthold of Ratisbon.

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

PERFECT CONTRITION.

“And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed.” Lk. xvii, 14. The Gospel reminds us of the effects produced by perfect contrition. Before the lepers showed themselves to the priests, on their way, as they went, they were cleansed. These ten lepers are, according to the Holy Fathers, the figures of sinners. As they were cleansed before they showed themselves to the priest, so we are cleansed from spiritual leprosy by perfect contrition, before we show ourselves to the priest. O wonderful effect of perfect contrition! As it is of the utmost consequence to have a complete knowledge of perfect contrition, I have determined to make it the subject of our present reflection.

I. WHAT IS PERFECT CONTRITION?

We are under an indispensable obligation to love God above all things, and to manifest this love by observing his commandments. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” John xiv, 21. Therefore by being attached to a created thing against his will, we refuse to him the due affections of our heart, and devote them to creatures, upon whom we set a higher value than upon him.

By perfect contrition this disorder is readjusted, the heart of the sinner loves God again above all things. Therefore, when God calls you to penance, he says to you what St. Remigius said to Chlodwig king of France, when he was to baptize him: “Burn what thou hast worshiped, and worship what thou hast burnt.” If we desire the remission of our sins, it is most necessary to love above all things our Lord whom we have despised, and henceforth to despise the hatred, lust, vengeance, pride, etc., in which we have delighted before.

After this preliminary remark, we may without difficulty understand what is perfect contrition. It is the wilful detesta-

tion of our sin, because by it we offend God, whom we now love above all things, with the firm resolution to sin no more. We infer from this that perfect contrition is caused by both the love of God and the hatred of sin, which however are inseparable, as the beautiful rose and its shadow.

But we have yet somewhat more to urge on the nature of the love for God and of hatred of sin, that we may give you a clearer knowledge of what constitutes perfect contrition.

The love required for a perfect contrition is not that love of tenderness which you perceive in your heart, when you fervently love a fellow-creature. The affections caused by this love are sometimes so strong, as to deprive a man of his peace of mind, and to disturb the balance of his reason. The love of God, although the love of tenderness for him is desirable also, is a far nobler love consisting in a profound reverence which prefers his friendship to all things, and is eager to forsake all earthly goods, rather than the friendship of God. The man of whom Nathan spoke to David, who had nothing but a little ewe-lamb, which had grown up in his house together with his children, eating of his bread, and drinking of his cup, and sleeping in his bosom, being unto him as a daughter (II Kings xii, 3), entertained the tenderest affections for this little creature. Suppose now that he had killed this little lamb to save a stranger from starvation, would his love for the lamb, or for the stranger, have been the more perfect? You say, his love for the stranger. Yet his love for the lamb was more tender. To save the life of his fellow-man, he consented to have his lamb killed. This is the love I speak of, on which perfect contrition is founded; a love of reverence, of esteem, which although not as tender as our love for parents, friends, and other of our fellow-creatures, nevertheless determines our will to endure the loss of anything, in order to obtain the friendship and grace of God. From this we conclude that it is not so difficult to acquire a perfect contrition, as many seem to think.

As regards hatred of sin, which is necessarily connected with perfect contrition, you must know that it is not necessary to

feel or perceive it, as you perceive hatred against a rattle-snake coming in your way. Hatred of sin is the act in which our will repents of sin, wishes that we had never committed it, and that we were able to destroy it, and is determined to undergo the greatest sufferings rather than to sin again; and all this, because sin is an offence against the divine bounty and majesty, not because we have to fear divine wrath. Although such contrition necessarily includes the resolution to amend our life, it is advisable to make this firm purpose explicitly. Cf. St. Thomas, Summa 3 p. q. 85, art. 6.

II. ON THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING PERFECT CONTRITION.

From what we have heard we infer that perfect contrition is not the work of divine grace only. This compunction will rise in the hearts of all who employ the proper means. These means are: 1, prayer; 2, meditation on the divine perfections; 3, reflection on the ignominy of sin.

1. As *prayer* is the universal means of obtaining all graces whatsoever, so it is, no doubt, a sure means of obtaining the grace of perfect contrition; which, as supernatural, must originate from grace, according to Jeremias, who says: "Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted." Lam. v, 21. God has promised this grace, if we ask him for it: "When thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him; yet so, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and all the affections of thy soul." Deut. iv, 29.

2. As regards *the meditation on the divine perfections*, it is sufficient to select one at a time, because we find so great beauty and majesty in one of them, as to induce us to perfect charity. Select for instance his infinite beauty, and call to your mind that the beauty of all creatures, real and possible, is a beam flowing from this eternal Sun; that the angels are enraptured by this divine beauty, in the contemplation of which they find the same ineffable delight, as on the first day. Call to your mind that, if the evil spirits and condemned souls could behold this beauty only for a moment, they could not but love God. In like manner you may meditate on every other divine perfection, especially

on his infinite beauty which induced him to create you, to regenerate you in the bosom of his Church; or on his infinite mercy inducing him to take the form of a servant, to become as one of us, and to die for us on the tree of malediction; to forgive us our sins, and to be our food in the Blessed Sacrament. Such and similar reflections will enkindle perfect charity and contrition in our hearts.

3. Besides, let us reflect on the *great outrage* we have committed by our sins against God. For the sake of our base passions, for sensual delights, we have forsaken divine friendship and grace. A horrible exchange!

III. SOLUTION OF SOME DOUBTS RESPECTING PERFECT CONTRITION.

Now that you have heard what is perfect contrition, and how it is elicited, I will go on to remove certain doubts which Christians often entertain with regard to perfect contrition.

1. You often feel some remaining inclination to sin, when you make an act of contrition, which makes you fear that your contrition is not such as it ought to be. I answer: This inclination is either voluntary, proceeding from your perverse will, or it is involuntary, proceeding from perverse human nature. If the first be the case, you have no genuine contrition; if this inclination proceeds from your perverse nature without your consent, it does not hinder the perfection of your contrition. But how can we distinguish between these two sources of the bad inclination? If you are firmly determined, come what may, not to commit the sin again, your contrition is not rendered imperfect in consequence of the bad inclination. If you hesitate between good and evil, if your resolution is not firm, but a mere volition, your contrition is defective.

2. Many of you entertain fears as to the perfection of their contrition because they do not shed tears. Be reassured. Tears are neither required, nor possible for every one. The prodigal son did not shed tears—at least Holy Scripture does not mention it—yet his contrition was undoubtedly perfect.

3. Sometimes you feel weary, because you know by sad experience that your relapse is probable and perhaps more than probable. Mind! Fear, on account of your frailty, does not exclude a firm determination to avoid sin. The certainty to sin no more, is one thing; the resolution to sin no more, is another. St. Philip Neri feared on account of his frailty every day. Yet, who will deny that he had a perfect contrition? If you are firmly resolved to sin no more, you may feel at ease.

4. Others entertain fear, because they know that not only love of God, but also dread of punishment, has a part in their contrition. I answer them, that man can repent of his sins for the motive of love and fear at the same time. A woman who has been unfaithful to her husband, can she not repent of her crime, from the double motive of fear of punishment, and the great contumely brought upon her husband? Repent, then, of your sins from a just fear of eternal punishment, and your contrition will be imperfect. Then reflect on the divine bounty and majesty offended by you, and your contrition will be perfect.

5. I hear you say: According to what our ghostly father preaches to-day, perfect contrition seems not so arduous. But we often heard you say and prove by Scripture, by the testimonies of the Holy Fathers, and by sad experience, that sinners cannot rely on the contrition they may experience on their death bed. How can these two assertions be reconciled with each other? I tell you, how? David could not walk in Saul's armour, not because it was impossible of itself, but because "he was not used to it." I Kings xvii, 39. In this sense, and for the same reason, I have been endeavoring so often to caution you not to put your confidence in conversion on death bed. The saintly Cardinal Bellarmine witnessed once with grief in his heart, how a sinner despaired on his death bed so as to prevent him from ever attempting to make a good contrition, because he had not learned it by practice in his life.

IV. THE ADVANTAGES OF PERFECT CONTRITION.

Although the case may never occur, when perfect contrition will be absolutely necessary for your salvation, yet the great

advantages resulting from it should induce you to make frequent acts of perfect contrition. And what are these advantages?

1. By perfect contrition the sinner is instantaneously cleansed from his sins, and adopted as one of God's children; whilst by reason of sin he had the devil for his father. "You are of your father, the devil; and the desires of your father you will do." John viii, 44.

2. If we are in the state of grace, the grace and beauty of our soul is increased and multiplied. A bride uses great efforts to increase her beauty, that she may be loved the more by her bridegroom. Your soul is the bride of God.

3. By perfect contrition the temporal punishment due for our past sins is either entirely or, at least partly, released; the flames of purgatory are extinguished. If you be negligent in making acts of perfect contrition, you show clearly that you either do not believe, how tormenting are the sufferings in purgatory; or that you are your own enemies.

4. Every act of perfect contrition augments your glory in heaven; and the least increase thereof is infinitely more valuable than the whole world.

5. Perfect contrition often elicited takes away the painful fear, by which even pious Christians are tormented of being out of the love of God. He who makes every day an act of perfect contrition, says Suarez, may rest assured that of his many acts of contrition there is at least one that took away his sin. (*De Gratia* ix, 11, n. 7).

6. This constant remembrance of your sins will be the seed of meekness and patience and of a penitential spirit. "I bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Micheas vii, 9.

Peroration: Blessed Angela de Foligno, in consequence of her frequent acts of contrition, desired to be trampled under foot by everyone, and became famous for her austerity. We read in the lives of many other Saints, that by extraordinary compunction they were led to a sacred hatred of their own-

selves. How often do confessors experience that penitents, in consequence of a great contrition, are induced to ask for a great penance, and mortify severely their own flesh by voluntary works of penance? Let us imitate them.

John B. Campadelli.

IV.

ON GENERAL CONFESSION.

“Go show yourselves to the priests.” Lk. xvii, 14. The ten lepers who, in confirmation of their being healed, had to show themselves to the priests, are figures of penitents in the New Covenant; who, in order to be made clean from their spiritual leprosy, have to show themselves to the priests in the confessional. There are many amongst them whose leprosy is quite an inveterate disease, because, although they showed themselves to the priests, they were never made clean. The only cure of their dreadful malady is a General Confession, on which I am going to address you to-day. A General Confession, in which we repeat all or some of our former confessions, is often necessary, and oftener, at least, useful and advisable.

PART I.

WHEN IS A GENERAL CONFESSION NECESSARY?

It happens sometimes that Christians who are lying on their death bed, never made a valid confession; and it may be that there are many amongst you, to whom a General Confession is absolutely necessary. St. Leonardo a Portu Maurizio distinguishes six classes of Christians to whom it is indispensable to repeat their former confessions.

1. The first class comprises all those who through shame or fear concealed a sin which they knew to be a mortal sin, or in regard to the mortal character of which they entertained at least grave doubts. Those who did not give the number of their mortal sins according to truth, concealed as many sins, as reality surpasses their confession, and those who left out such circumstances

as change the nature of sin (v. g. fornication with a married person constitutes the sin of adultery), belong also to this class. All these lepers are obliged to repeat their sins committed from the time of their last valid confession.

2. The *second class* comprises all those who left out in their confession mortal sins, because they either did not examine at all their conscience, or examined it only superficially. For this reason many lukewarm Christians who, although they confess only once a year, spend no time in examining their conscience, and in consequence are not able to confess what they are bound to confess, receive the Sacrament of Penance sacrilegiously.

3. The *third class* comprises all those who had no contrition for their sins. How many are those who are not sorry at all for having offended God! How many whose contrition is neither *universal* nor *supernatural*. All of these make their confession to their own perdition! If the priest, who does not see the heart of man, said, I absolve thee, God in heaven who searches the heart, said, I absolve thee not.

4. The *fourth class* comprises all those who made no firm resolution of amendment. If you never showed an amelioration of your life; if shortly after confession you fell back into your wonted vices of unchaste conversation, of fornication, of drunkenness, of cursing and swearing, it is most assuredly a token of want of resolution.

5. The *fifth class* comprises all those who were not willing to shun the proximate occasion of sin: those who by experience know that whenever they were in a saloon, they became intoxicated, and yet continued to frequent them; also those who fell repeatedly in sin with a person of the other sex, and yet continued to live under the same roof, etc.

6. The *sixth class* comprises all those who made no restitution of unjust goods, nor repaired damages inflicted on others; and those who living in enmity refused to be reconciled with their neighbor.

Now take the candle and search your house; examine the state of your conscience; and if you find that you have sufficient

reason to doubt the validity of your former confessions, show yourselves to the priest, and "whatever he shall say to you, do ye."

PART II.

TO WHOM IS A GENERAL CONFESSION USEFUL AND ADVISABLE?

To all who never made one. Hear the reasons for this assertion.

1. General Confession is one of the principal means to obtain a knowledge of the state of your soul. If you set the forest on fire on all sides, says St. Leonardo a Portu Maurizio, you will be surprised at seeing how great a multitude of wild beasts, wolves, and bears and foxes, etc., were hidden in its coverts. You witness a similar effect, when you make a General Confession, by which you set your conscience on fire on all sides. How great may appear the multitude of sins concealed from you heretofore. Many Christians who resolved to make a General Confession only as an act of devotion, avow after its performance that they discovered sins and causes of uneasiness of which they never thought before.

2. By General Confession your heart becomes more contrite. We see all the wild beasts of our sins, the monsters of our own soul, on the path of our past life, from our childhood to this day. This bewildering sight urges us to sigh with king Esdras: "My God, I am confounded, and ashamed to lift up my face to thee: for our iniquities are multiplied over our heads; and our sins are grown up even unto heaven." I Esdras ix, 6. But the greater our contrition, the greater is our security of a worthy reception of the sacrament, and the more abundant the sacramental graces, so that we may obtain even the release of all or nearly all temporal punishment due for our past sins.

A hearty sorrow for, and detestation of, our sins necessarily includes a firmer resolution of amendment. Hence it is that most penitents date their conversion from the time of their General Confession.

3. From this it follows that a General Confession is the

source of great inward peace. William duke of Aquitain, after he had made his General Confession to St. Bernard, felt a sweet peace and heavenly joy, such as he had never before experienced in the midst of all the joys and pleasures of the world. In like manner does every sinner, in consequence of a sincere General Confession, experience the delight of heart which king David felt, when he exclaimed: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Better is one day in thy courts above thousands" (in the pleasures of the world). Ps. lxxxiii, 2, 11. How could it be otherwise? The heaviest of all burdens has been taken away from him, and the salvation of his soul has been more secured. Therefore it is that we, the ministers of God, are frequently witnesses of the sweet peace pervading the soul of a Christian on his death bed, when, in former years, he had made a General Confession * * St. Charles Borromaeo, St. Francis of Sales and a thousand other Saints made not only their General Confession, but retired every year into solitude, to explore the condition of their souls.

Peroration: If there be any amongst you who never made a General Confession, I beg him to do so. The sooner the better: You may make it at any time, although there are certain periods of life, when a General Confession is more useful and advisable, especially on entering on a state of life, and, if it was not done before, in dangerous illness.

J. E. Zollner.

Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CARE FOR EARTHLY THINGS.

Pilgrim and stranger upon earth, man should raise up his spiritual eyes toward heaven, his eternal home, and gather treasures for heaven by striving for perfection. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice." Mt. vi, 33. Nevertheless it would be a fatal error to suppose that our Lord forbids us to have a reasonable care for the things of this world,—for our temporal welfare. Only an exaggerated solicitude for food and raiment and our future well-being is prohibited by the Lord. Let us then see, what is our duty relative to earthly cares.

I. OUR DUTY RELATIVE TO EARTHLY CARES.

1. That we should have a sufficient care for our earthly welfare, is the will of God, as manifested by the *organization of human nature*.

As we consist of body and soul, life is impossible, unless we provide for our bodily needs. The all-wise Creator gave us the faculty to provide for ourselves, which implies the obligation to employ this faculty. This duty is the more urgent since the fall of man, because nature no longer brings forth its gifts spontaneously. "Man is born to labor, and the bird to fly." Job v, 7.

2. It is a *distinct command*. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken." Gen. iii, 19. The Apostle inculcates this law, saying plainly: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." II Thess. iii, 10.

3. In creating man as a *social being*, member of a large society, God had the end in view that one by his particular talents should supply the wants of another. Can this design be accomplished, unless every one makes use of the talents confided to him? If idleness were general, poverty necessarily resulting

therefrom would impede all human progress, and would shut the gates of heaven. For experience teaches, that poverty caused by man's own fault drives most men into the abyss of vice, which would be still more apparent, if such poverty were universal.

4. *Fraternal charity*, the fundamental law of Christianity, requires of us to labor faithfully. Our Lord says: "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them." Mt. vii, 12. It is consequently the duty, of every one to use his best efforts never to be a burden to others. It is ignominious, and contrary to fraternal charity, to look up to your brother for your daily bread, if you are in the enjoyment of sufficient health and strength to earn it. Such men are the drones in the human hive. Let them think of the account they will have to give before the judgment-seat of God.

Moreover, fraternal charity requires of us to assist those who are poor, in whom the consequences of the first sin are the most apparent. "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me." Mt. xxv, 40. Besides, every one is obliged by nature to have care of his own. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v. 8. Verily, such a one denies his own natural instincts, and a horrible judgment awaits him.

5. *The care of our own soul* should be another motive. Idleness is the beginning of all evil. No less true is it that constant diligence is the pillar of all virtues. Experience teaches you that the worst of men are the idlers, who steal from God his day, and from their fellow-men the fruit of their industry; whilst, on the other hand, the best of men are those who discharge diligently, without solicitude, the duties of every day life.

II. HOW THIS CARE IS TO BE RENDERED WORTHY OF A CHRISTIAN.

1. We must not regard the striving for earthly things as the destiny of our short earthly stay, but merely as a means of

obtaining our eternal destiny. We must never forget what is above, where Christ is.

2. At the same time that you are industrious and thrifty, you should keep yourselves free from inordinate affection for earthly possessions, from valuing them more highly than eternal goods. You should be on your guard against avarice, and against committing any kind of injustice. You must not be the slave of your property, but your property must serve you.

3. You must despise any illegal means of acquiring temporal goods, and respect the rights of others, shunning fraud and usury.

4. Temporal pursuits should not hinder you from accomplishing your spiritual duties. Whilst you feed your body, you should not neglect to nourish your soul. To attend divine service, to receive regularly the Holy Sacraments, to say your daily prayers in common with your family, let all this be the delight of your heart.

5. Unite with your industry an implicit confidence in God, from whom every perfect gift comes, and without whose blessing all your efforts are in vain. Then you will not tremble for the future, "knowing that to them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii, 28.

6. You should also be resigned to God's will. When a storm damages your crop, when the army-worm eats up a great portion of your wheat, you know that both storm and worm are messengers of Divine Providence, either for punishment or for probation. Such calamities should, besides, not prevent you from toiling hard again, being convinced that the same Lord who chastises, blesses also.

Peroration: Allow me, in conclusion, to exhort you from the depth of my heart to sanctify your labors, and the earnings of your labors, by paying your tithes to Almighty God. Have a loving care for the house, wherein our Incarnate God dwells for our sake and love, so that you may justly say: "O Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house." Contribute your share in keeping up our Catholic schools, where the little brethren and

sisters of the divine Child Jesus are shown the path to heaven. "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me."

Kroneberg.

IV.

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT AND OMNISCIENT.

How full of consolation are the words of the Gospel! God the heavenly Father feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the grass of the field. How much more will he feed and clothe us, his children? For our Father knoweth that we need all these things. These words call to our mind the important truth, that God is everywhere and sees everything, wherefore we confess him to be omnipresent and omniscient. As these two divine perfections are the foundation of the confidence we put in the Lord, let them be the subject of our present meditation.

PART I.

WHAT FAITH TEACHES US AS TO THESE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

I. God is omnipresent, which means: he is everywhere—in heaven, on earth, and in all places. That you may the better understand this, I will explain to you, 1, the fact that God is everywhere, and 2, in what manner he is everywhere.

1. God is everywhere, i. e., *in all places*.

a. You cannot find a single spot in the vast space of creation, where God is not present. If you could travel all over the world, you would find places not inhabited by man, but no one where God is not. The Prophet Jonas was foolish enough to attempt to flee from the face of the Lord, but he found his God on the stormy sea. If you could direct your course to the sun, moon, and stars, and traverse these sidereal bodies in all directions, you would never find a single spot where God is not present. The royal prophet praises the divine omnipresence in this beautiful language: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven,

thou art there; if I descend into hell, thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me; and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. cxxxviii, 7-10.

b. God is everywhere, i. e., he is *with all creatures*; with the angels and saints in heaven, with every man on earth, and with all irrational beings. If he were not, how could he provide for them, and feed them? There are more than one thousand millions of men on earth; God is with every one of them. "The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world; and that which containeth all things, hath knowledge of the voice." Wisd. i, 7.

c. God is everywhere, i. e., he is present *at every action* which every one performs. He was present when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit; when Cain slew his brother Abel. He is present at whatever we may do. "The eyes of the Lord in every place behold the good and the evil." Prov. xv, 3.

2. *How is God everywhere?*

a. Not only by his power and efficacy, but *in person*, really and substantially. The bright sun is in all places of the earth, not really, but by his efficacy, illuminating and warming all things. God is not far from us like the sun, so as to exercise only his power upon earth, but he is in person, in reality in all places. "Is it not I who replenish heaven and earth?"

b. God is everywhere, *whole and entire*. For this reason his presence is quite different from ours. When we are in a room, it cannot be said that we are in every part of the room. God is in every place, be it ever so small, whole and entire.

c. Nevertheless God occupies no space, being in every place *without extension*. Being a pure Spirit, he occupies no space, as our soul occupies no space in our body either.

d. God is everywhere, being in all places *at once*. He is in the stars and in this place of worship, and in every country and place.

e. God by his omnipresence replenishes and *penetrates all things*. "He is not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and we move, and we are." Act. xvii, 27-28.

II. God is omniscient, which means, that he knows all things perfectly, and has so known from all eternity; he knows all things past, present, and to come, even our most secret thoughts.

1. God knows *all things*. Learned men know a great deal; the angels far more. Yet there are many things which even the angels do not know. God knows all things: the stars, their volume and distance from one another; he knows the plants that grow in the field; he knows all drops of water. "He beholdeth the ends of the world, and looketh on all things that are under heaven." Job. xxviii, 24.

2. God knows all things *perfectly*. The little we know, we know imperfectly. Every man has yet to learn. God knows all things profoundly, perfectly. "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts." Ecclus. xxiii, 28.

3. God knows all things *from all eternity*. Whatever man knows, he has learned it gradually. God never learned anything, but his science is ever the same as he himself is ever the same. "All things were known to the Lord God, before they were created; so also after they were perfected, he beholdeth all things." Ecclus. xxiii, 29. "He seeth from eternity to eternity; and there is nothing wonderful before him." Ecclus. xxxix, 25.

4. God knows all things, *past, present, and to come*. We know very little of what has passed during the six thousand years since the creation of the world, very little of what happens at present in the whole world and in heaven, and nothing about the future. God knows all this in its minutest details. "The Lord declareth the things that are past, and the things that are to come, and revealeth the traces of hidden things." Ecclus. xlii, 19.

5. God knows *our most secret thoughts*. He knows our heart, its inclinations and desires, better than we know ourselves. Christ said to the Pharisees: "You are they who justify themselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for

that which is high before men, is an abomination before God." Lk. xvi, 15.

PART II.

BENEFITS RESULTING RELATIVE TO OUR MORALS.

The frequent remembrance of God's omnipresence and omniscience guards us against sin, incites us to good works, and gives us courage and consolation in all difficulties and troubles.

1. St. Basil says that the earnest and constant remembrance of God, the Omnipresent and Omniscient, is one of the most *efficacious protections against sin*. If we are ashamed to commit sins in the sight of an honest man, how much less should we attempt it in the sight of the King of kings, who is substantial holiness? Remembering the presence of God, Joseph of Egypt said to Potiphar's wife: "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" Gen. xxxix, 9. What else but the same reflection kept Susanna from sin? "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord." Dan. xiii, 23. Let us then in the morning and in the evening, at our work, when alone, or in society, say to ourselves: God sees me. We should use this pious exercise as our daily bread, says St. Francis de Sales. As we eat bread at every meal, so the remembrance of God's presence should accompany us in all our doings, and above all, in all our temptations. And ye parents, inculcate on the mind of your dear little ones, what Tobias engraved in the mind of his son: "All the days of thy life have God in thy mind; and take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord our God." Tob. iv. 6.

2. The frequent remembrance of God's presence *incites us to good works*. The apprentice is industrious in the presence of his master. "Noe was a just and perfect man, he walked with God." Gen. vi, 9. God himself said to Abraham: "Walk before me, and be perfect."

Besides, we keep united with God the source and model of all sanctity. Experience teaches that we conform our life to the

morals of our constant companions. Thus pious Christians receive all light and zeal from the divine Sun, in whose presence they live. The constant remembrance of the divine presence was the ordinary means of leading the Saints to heaven.

3. Another benefit is the *consolation and courage* we derive in our afflictions and tribulations. When David was surrounded by evils without number (Ps. xxxix, 13), he never lost courage. "Though I should walk, he says, in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me." Ps. xxii, 4. When Job was forsaken by his friends, and his own wife, he remembered God, his only true friend. "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that knoweth my conscience, is on high." Job. xvi, 20. We cannot but find consolation in the thought: My Father sees me suffer. It will move us to say to our soul with the Psalmist: "Why art thou sad, O my soul? And why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to him: the salvation of my countenance and my God." Ps. xl, i, 6.

Peroration: Let us then frequently say to ourselves: God is with me, God sees me, and the frequent remembrance of the divine presence will keep us everywhere, even in secret, from sin, and incite us to good, and will give us courage and consolation in all difficulties and troubles.

J. E. Zollner.

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

ON THE ART OF DYING WELL.

The youth at Naim had the grace to die twice ; so that, if he departed this life the first time unprepared, he could yet learn how to die well the second time. We have no hope whatever, if we should not die well at our first departure, of repairing the misfortune, by dying well at a second departure. If we then die but once, we should earnestly endeavor to learn the art of dying well. Let us see what we have to do, in order to die well.

I. REMEMBER YOUR LAST END.

When you are about to make a long journey, you inquire after the route, the stopping places, etc. Knowing that you have to make a journey into another world, you should first travel over this unknown road spiritually, before you have to enter upon it in reality. Represent to yourselves that you will pass through death and judgment to an uncertain end of your journey. You know not whether that end will be eternal happiness or eternal condemnation. Call to mind that your body will be laid in the narrow habitation of the grave, and that your soul will appear before the judgment seat of the omniscient Judge. Ask yourself, if you can answer for yourself respecting your various actions ; or if you will be like a criminal who studies in vain what to answer to the charges brought against him. In so doing, you will make due preparation for your journey, and you will not be unlike those great men, who thought continually of their last end, before it approached. St. John the Alms-giver had his grave dug in his life time. The Emperor Charles V. had his coffin carried along with him on his many journeys, calling it his dearest treasure. B. Albert the Great after resigning his Episcopal see of Ratisbon, repaired to the cloister cell, and visited every day the place selected for his burial, to pray there for himself, as if he had died already. Let us, too, remember

our death at the sight of the graveyard, at the burial of our friends, when we go to rest at night, etc.

II. MAKE YOUR LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, AND PUT ALL YOUR EARTHLY AFFAIRS IN ORDER.

Isaias the prophet reminded the king Ezechias: "Take order with thy house; for thou shalt die, and not live." The same warning is given to everyone of us. According to the example of Jesus Christ who in his last testament left peace for our inheritance, ("Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you," John xiv, 27;) you should leave peace with your family, which will be disturbed, perhaps by lawsuits, unless you have taken order with your house. "Give charge concerning thy house," God says to you, "while you live, before you die," as he said to king Ezechias. Give your last charges, by making your last will and testament.

1. You should make your testament in time, when being of good health and sound mind. By deferring it to your death, you may be unable either to make it at all, or to make it aright. Ezechias, although a holy king, was so dismayed at the announcement of his death, that far from giving charge concerning his house "he turned his face to the wall, and wept with much weeping." IV Kings xx, 2.

2. Your testament should be well and justly arranged. Therefore provide in the first place that your debts be paid, that you may not be thrown into prison like the servant in the Gospel. Bequeath your property to those who are entitled to it by natural law. Of whatever you have a right to dispose of, at your own discretion, consult first the honor of God, and then the needs of your fellow-men. When you possess great wealth, you have, then, the last chance to give alms, which you ought to have done before. After you have provided for others, do not forget your own soul, as it may easily happen, that you will not enter heaven, before you have passed through the flames of purgatory. It is very advisable, however, to give or decree these alms, when in the state of grace, that the act itself may be meritorious.

3. Whatever you can execute yourself, do not leave to be done by others. If you be negligent and tardy in your own affairs, can you expect of others that they will be less careless than you? A father asked on his death-bed his three sons what they would promise him to do for the welfare of his soul after his death. The one promised three holy masses; the other some alms; the third would not promise anything, saying: "Father, your property being still yours, I do not promise that your children will incur expenses for you, after they have received what is theirs. You had better provide for yourself, whilst it is time." Therefore Tobias sent for his son to arrange all things with him, before he died. Gerson, chancellor of the Parisian university, shortly before his death, gave munificent alms to thousands of the poor, asking them to implore the divine mercy on their knees, saying: "O Lord and God, have mercy on Thy servant Gerson." After you have distributed your property, leave off all affection for earthly things, that you may fall as a ripe fruit from the tree, not having need of being torn from the world to your own detriment. Say with David: "What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? * * * Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion for ever." Ps. lxxii, 25, 26.

III. PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS.

King Saul, when about to send David to fight against Goliath, clothed him with his garments, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. I Kings xvii, 38. The Holy Church acts in a similar way, when about to send forth the Christian that he may fight the last battle against the evil spirit.

1. She first clothes him with the armour of the Sacrament of Penance, wherein he is able to withstand the attacks of the enemy. Be carefully prepared, before you receive this holy sacrament. Think of the many Saints, as Jerome, Augustine, Martin, Francis of Assisi, who performed works of severe penance on their death bed.

2. She clothes him with the garments of Jesus Christ, i. e., she administers to him the Holy Eucharist as viaticum, that through the merits of Jesus Christ thus applied to him he may find grace before God. Holy Communion is the wedding garment, put on us by Jesus Christ, without which we are not allowed to appear before the King, the Father of the bridegroom. Mt. xxii. The dying will soon appear before God, and "who shall be able to stand before the Lord this holy God?" said the men of Bethsames. "The heavens are not pure in his sight," said Job.

What then shall the poor dying sinner do? Following the advice of Rebecca, he should clothe himself with the garments, i. e., the merits, of his first-born brother, which is effected especially by Holy Communion, in which we put on, so to say, the form of Jesus Christ.

3. Lastly the Holy Church puts a helmet upon his head, by administering to him the Sacrament of extreme unction, which is the last means of salvation, as the helmet is the last of the armour. By this holy Sacrament "the Lord shall raise him up," (James v, 15) that is, protect him from the horrors of death, and from despondency of mind.

Peroration: I wish to God that every one of us would receive the Sacraments of the dying in time, and that our friends would warn us, before it be too late, to send for the succour of the Church. James v, 14.

M. Faber.

IV.

CHRISTIAN ATTENDANCE AT A FUNERAL.

"A dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her." Lk. vii, 12. The citizens of Naim paid the last honors to the dead young man with a feeling of compassion; and with sincere joy they saw him rise from the bier, restored to life by the Life-giver. What are the sentiments with which we at-

tend a funeral? If they were the sentiments of a true Christian, we should return better men from this touching ceremony. Let us then see the manner in which a good Christian should attend a funeral.

I. OUR CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE SURVIVING FAMILY.

1. Let us attend the funeral not merely for the sake of politeness, but out of Christian charity.

a. Such attendance is in *conformity with human nature*. A member of our own human family is carried to his or her last resting-place. Therefore our hearts should be moved with compassion. Even Gentiles have their imposing funeral ceremonies.

b. It is *beneficial* to ourselves, since we are reminded of being brethren to one another, and children of the same Father who is in heaven; and it is beneficial to the surviving family and friends, to whom the last honors, we pay to the deceased, are a consolation.

c. It is *meritorious*, since God himself enjoins it upon us and explicitly promises us a reward for our compliance. "My son, shed tears over the dead; and begin to lament as if thou hadst suffered some great harm, and according to judgment cover his body, and neglect not his burial." Ecclus. xxxviii, 16. "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord." Tobias xii, 12.

2. *Let us succor the deceased*. By mere attendance, or by bewailing, and wearing mourning attire, we do not come to his relief. We should show our sincere brotherly love to him:

a. By *prayer*. The knell, the sprinkling of the corpse with Holy Water, the incense, the candles, the cross, remind us of prayer, and symbolize certain acts of devotion for the release of the soul of the deceased.

b. By the *Holy Sacrifice of Mass*, it being the most efficacious means of delivering souls from Purgatory. You should at least attend with devotion the Requiem Mass offered up for the repose of the Christian soul.

c. By *good works*. To the deceased the time of gaining merits is past; but, thanks to the Communion of Saints, we are enabled to perform charitable acts, as alms-giving, penance, etc., for his release.

3. *Let us console the family of the deceased.* How great is often their grief!

a. Let us "*weep with them that weep.*" Rom. xii, 15. Compassion is like balsam. Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and when he had seen the widow bereft of her only son, was moved with compassion towards her.

b. *Let us speak comfort to the grief-stricken family.* "Weep not," said Jesus. Let us also endeavor to wipe away their tears by reminding them of the dispositions of Divine Providence, of immortality, and future re-union.

c. *Let us perform consoling works.* Jesus gave to the widow her son. Never console a poor widow or orphan with empty words only, which, if uttered by those who could give some relief, without being accompanied by works of consolation, rather hurt than console. If we act accordingly, God will, in evil days, not leave us without consolation and help, and he will certainly reward us in eternity.

II. OUR CONDUCT WITH REGARD TO OURSELVES.

A funeral is a warning to us.

1. Look at the corpse.

a. *What has it been?* What we are: full of life and health, full of hopes, prospects, and plans for the future. Was this person young or old, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, learned or illiterate? It does not matter. No one is secured against death. The only important question is this: Was the dead person virtuous, or wicked?

b. *What is it now?* What we all shall be: a hideous corpse, deprived of life and beauty, deprived of all advantages of mind, form, and earthly conditions. Only one thing has been spared by death: the good and evil deeds done in life.

c. *How has it come to this state?* In the same way as that by which we must pass:—by death. Has death come unex-

pected, or after an early warning? When and where? We may now be able to answer these questions with regard to the deceased, who himself in his lifetime only knew that he must surely die, and that, if he died in mortal sin, he would be lost for ever.

d. What will it be? Like every one of us, a prey to vermin, an inhabitant of the grave. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* But, at the same time, it is the seed of a future body—either glorious or ignominious. Judge from this, how venerable your body is, which therefore you should keep holy and undefiled. May this be your firm resolution!

2. *Let us turn our eyes to Jesus the Life-giver.* At each funeral we are reminded of him, and of the resurrection of the flesh

a. By the Cross, which is planted on the grave. It is the sign of our salvation, of our hope, that hope which alone remains, after all earthly hopes have vanished away. Death came in consequence of sin. But on the Cross sin was atoned for, death and hell conquered. Therefore we hail the Cross as a pledge of resurrection, recognizing it as the tree of life which was planted to occupy the place of the first tree of life in paradise.

b. By the cemetery, the "God's Acre," which reminds us that a valuable seed, God's own property, is confided to the earth, that after its corruption a new body may spring forth for the great day of God's harvest. Cf. Ezechiel xxxvii, 1-14; I Cor. xv, 35-44.

Peroration: Would to God that, whenever we attend a funeral, we might, like the citizens of Naim, return to our houses with increased fear and love of God. What they beheld with their corporeal eyes, we behold with the eyes of faith. But only if our fate be animated by charity, shall our hope not be confounded.

Tschupik.

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

IT IS VERY DANGEROUS TO DELAY REPENTANCE.

An ox or an ass are immediately drawn out of the pit, although it be on a Sabbath day, or great obstacles be in the way, the danger increasing by the shortest delay. Yet, when your soul, poor sinner, falls into the pit of sin, you are never in a hurry to draw her out, to save her from ruin by instantaneous repentance. Then, every day is a Sabbath day, and to every warning the tardy fool replies: Leave me alone; to-morrow, next year, on my death-bed, I will do penance. Let me warn you, whilst it is yet time, of the great danger of such delay.

I. IT IS VERY DANGEROUS TO DELAY REPENTANCE.

He who refuses to be converted to-day, runs the risk of never being converted at all.

1. *Time is uncertain.* "Some one may think, when I have reached old age, I will betake myself to penance; but how is it that human infirmity can be guilty of such foolhardy presumption, when not so much as one day is under our control?" Caesarius. Think of the rich man, who thought within himself: "What shall I do, because I have not where to lay up together my fruits? And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and will build greater. * * * And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?" Lk. xii, 18. Time being uncertain, hasten to secure your salvation. "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For his wrath shall come on a sudden; and in the time of vengeance he shall destroy thee." Ecclus. v, 8, 9. Many Christians, deluded by Satan, and trusting in the mercy of God, who wills not the death of the sinner,

seem to conclude that they have a right to go on in their wicked ways. But they should know that God wills not the death of the sinner, but "*that he be converted and live*;" from which it follows that we should "work our salvation with fear and trembling." Philip. ii, 12.

2. *Your conversion at a late period is doubtful.*

a. *Reason teaches this.* Enlightened by revelation, it teaches you that you are in need of grace; and that, on your part, a good will is required. Do you then not see, how foolish it is to resist now divine grace, on the ground, that you will make use of it at a later period, if it should be again offered to you? You cannot rely on your own will for the future, if it be perverse and obstinate now.

b. *Experience teaches you* that young people, who are given to the vice of intemperance, impurity, avarice, etc., are often converted, whilst sincere conversions of aged drunkards, fornicators, misers, are extremely rare.

3. *Conversion on a death-bed is very problematic.*

Verily, it is more than surprising that there should Christians be found who defer their conversion, that is, their everlasting life, to their death-bed.

Let us suppose (for a mere supposition it is) that you will not die suddenly, and that you will have time to send for a priest, what then?

a. *Consult your own reason*, to which your conversion on your death-bed must appear improbable, in the *first place* on the part of grace. It is not probable that God will reward your wickedness with a miracle of grace, and without this, the presumptuous sinner is certainly lost. In the *second place*, on the part of the sinner. No conversion is possible save by thorough hatred of sin and sincere love of God. Can you suppose that he who did not forsake sin, but whom sin forsook, who offended God, until he was no longer able to offend him, who never practically learned how to pray and to repent, will be able to perform all this to perfection in the midst of the terrors of death? Have you not good reason to suppose it all to be hypocrisy?

b. Consult experience. By experience we know that men vicious in their life time are usually either impenitent sinners, who do not give up their hatred of religion, their avarice, and enmities, or doubtful penitents, who, surrounded by the terrors and pains of death, make some acts of repentance, and then fall into lethargy, being indifferent to hell and heaven? Where is the priest who has not known this sad experience?

c. Objections. You may say that there are instances of sincere conversion in the evening of life, v. g., of the thief on the cross. St. Augustine replies: "One, that you despair not, only one, that you presume not." Nevertheless, you say, I may be one of those few who find grace on their death-bed. Would it not be more reasonable to say: It is more likely that I shall not be of the number of these few? You throw the pearl into the ocean, hoping it will return to the surface. You set your house on fire, hoping that the fire may be possibly put out.

(The parable on the barren fig tree (Lk. xiii, 6) is here appropriate. Read the preceding verses also.)

II. TO DELAY REPENTANCE IS VERY DETRIMENTAL TO OUR HIGHEST INTERESTS.

Suppose that you should be sincerely converted in later years, you sustain, anyhow, a great damage by delaying your repentance.

1. Your conversion becomes more difficult from day to day. You resemble a man who drives a nail deeper into the wall, because, he is not able at present to pull it out; or a man who, not venturing to cross a creek, because it is too broad, follows its course, until it grows much broader; or a man who, having no courage to uproot a sapling, waits until it has grown into a tree.

Jesus said to the young man at Naim, "Young man, I say to thee, arise," and to the daughter of Jairus, 'Tabitha Kumi,' but to Lazarus he cried out with a loud voice, and with tears. The first day denotes the bad desire; the second, the consent; the third, the bad action; the fourth, the bad habit. Whoever reaches the fourth day in his sinfulness, cannot be raised to life

except by the loud crying and tears of our Lord : would it not be much easier to begin your conversion on the first or second day ?

2. By deferring your conversion even to an old age, you sustain a far greater damage :

Because of the loss of time, and of the great malignity of deferring your conversion, in the hope of the divine mercy ; and because of the necessity it places you under of making a greater atonement.

3. Conversion on your death-bed is the more difficult, “because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.” Apoc. xii, 12.

Peroration : The damage sustained by delaying your repentance is exceedingly great, and greater is the danger of never repenting. “To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, according to the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, they proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long I was offended with that generation, and I said: These always err in heart. And these men have not known my ways ; so I swore in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my rest.” Ps. xciv, 8 ; Prov. i, 23-30. The parable on the unprofitable servant, Mt. xxiv, 48. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem that does not know the time of grace. Lk. xix, 42.

Ludovicus Granatensis.

VI.

IN WHAT MANNER WE SHOULD KEEP HOLY THE LORD'S DAY.

By false zeal of religion men are often led astray. The Pharisees regarded it as a profanation of the Sabbath, that on this day Jesus healed the sick ; whilst they did not fear to violate it by rescuing their domestic animals from imminent danger. We meet Christians, too, who, like the Pharisees, declaim with great warmth against the profanation of the Lord's Day,

and yet do not keep it in the right manner. Let me then give you a short instruction upon the manner in which we should keep holy the Lord's Day.

PART I.

THE SUNDAY IS A HOLY DAY.

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Gen. ii, 3. That which is sacred, must be kept sacred.

I. *What then is to be avoided with special care on Sundays?*

1. *Whatever is evidently sin.* True, sin is never allowed; but it is more abominable when committed on holy days. Yet, most sins are committed on Sundays, so that the Lord may say in our day, what he once said through his prophet: "I hate, and have rejected your festivities." Amos v, 21.

2. *Whatever is an occasion of sin* in your regard, such as the theatre, dancing, dangerous assignations, frequenting drinking saloons, in many cases. "It would be better to dig all day, than dance all day on festivals." St. Augustine. "Is it not a great offence against God, and some kind of a sacrilege to spend days, particularly dedicated to the Lord, in the follies of the world, and vain pleasures?" St. Cyrillus.

II. *What works are to be performed on Sundays in particular?*

1. *Works of religion:*

a. We must attend Holy Mass. Besides the precept of the Church, the law of nature obliges us. For we know by the law inscribed in our hearts that we should endeavor, especially on the Lord's Day, to honor God in such a manner as is most pleasing to him. But God is honored most by the Holy Sacrifice of Mass.

b. We should hear with zeal the word of God, and read devotional books.

c. We should betake ourselves to fervent prayer, both privately and with others. The latter is desirable with regard to our fellow-men, to whom we give a good example, whilst private prayer is a duty imposed on us in consequence of our indigency and entire dependence on God.

2. *Works of charity*, especially the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

a. God himself performs these works especially on Sundays. Although he is grievously offended on these days, he does not cease doing good to men; and we cannot honor him in a better way, than by following his example.

b. Jesus Christ performed these works especially on the Sabbath day. On this day he healed the man sick of the palsy, and the man who had his hand withered (Mt. xii, 9-21); the blind man at Jerusalem (John ix, 1-41); and the man languishing thirty-eight years. (John v.)

c. The Apostles and the early Christians performed the same works on the Lord's Day. St. Peter healed a lame man on a Sabbath day (Act. iii, 1-9); and St. Paul performed the same miracle at Lystra on a Sabbath day. Act. xiv, 7-10.

d. We ought to perform works of charity also. Only Pharisees do not acknowledge this obligation, or even consider the performance of such charitable deeds as a profanation of the Sunday. "Although we are prohibited on festival days to perform servile works, yet we are commanded to perform charitable works." St. Irenaeus.

PART II.

THE SUNDAYS ARE DAYS OF THE LORD.

This is insinuated by the name *Dominica*. We should in consequence devote this day, not to the service of the world, but entirely to the service of God. To his service should be devoted:

I. *All the faculties of our body.* Therefore we should omit

1. All *servile* works, except when necessity requires them to be performed. Otherwise you would not enjoy divine blessing, as by them you do not serve God, but the world.

2. All *worldly* business, as buying and selling, by which our heart is diverted from God and his service. "On these days we should keep away from all business, that we may devote ourselves to God's service." St. Augustine.

II. *The faculties of our soul:*

1. *Our understanding*, that we may obtain a profounder knowledge of God and his law. We have been created for the purpose of knowing God; and the days of the Lord are the most suitable to meditate on the perfections of God. For this reason it was that Jesus endeavored, especially on the Jewish Sabbath, to implant clearer ideas concerning God and divine service into the hearts of the Jewish people. Cf. Lk. iv, 15; John ix, 14.

2. *Our memory*, that we may remember the benefits of God. Such was the end of the institution of the holy days. The Sabbath was to remind the Jews of the creation. The Lord's day is to remind us of the redemption. Easter was celebrated in the Old Covenant in remembrance of the delivery from Egyptian captivity; in the new covenant it is celebrated in remembrance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The natural duty of gratitude toward God requires that, especially on the days of the Lord, we should remember his benefits.

3. *Our will*, that we may perfectly love God. The Sabbath is a sign of the divine love and friendship toward men. "See that you keep my Sabbath: because it is a sign between me and you in your generations." Exod. xxxi, 43. We should make it also the sign of our love and obedience toward him.

Menne.

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

“And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: “What think you of Christ? Whose son is he?” In these words Jesus asked the most momentous of questions. It is the cardinal question, in our days also, which demands an answer. We answer with St. Peter, “Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” Mt. xvi, 16. We are determined, if necessary, to seal this faith, which is within us, with our own heart’s blood. And that we may be more able to give an account of this our firm faith, I will recall to your mind some of the many proofs of the divinity of Jesus Christ. These are (1) the prophecies; (2) the doctrine and life of Jesus Christ; (3) the works performed by Jesus Christ.

I. THE PROPHECIES.

1. Throughout all the generations of mankind, from the beginning, we hear the Lord God promising a Redeemer to the fallen human family. This faith in a Redeemer to come was handed down by the Jews to their posterity, and preserved by all the nations of the earth. For, the natives of Asia, the refined Grecians and Romans, the inhabitants of the barren plains of Africa, and even the Indians of the New World, expected a mediator and helper to come from heaven.

2. God, by the mouth of his prophets, delineated so clearly the outlines of the life of the Redeemer to come, that from their prophecies alone his advent could be recognized.

The Prophet Daniel (ix, 24, etc.) foretold that not quite seventy weeks of years, i. e., 490 years should elapse from the time when it was commanded that Jerusalem should be rebuilt, until the death of Christ. “And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain; and the people that shall deny him shall not be his. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall

destroy the city and the sanctuary * * * And there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation; and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end." Jacob had prophesied that at the time of the coming of the Messias the sceptre should have been taken away from Juda. Gen. xlix, 10. According to the Prophet Aggeus, the Saviour was to come at a time when the second temple was yet standing. He pronounced this prophecy to console the Jews, when returning out of the Babylonian captivity they wept bitterly at the sight of the new temple which in comparison to the first was as nothing in their eyes. (Chapter ii.) Isaias had foretold that the Messias should be born of a virgin in the house of David (Isai. vii, 14; vi, 1); Bethlehem was to be the birth place. (Mich. v, 2.) He should be adored by kings from distant countries. Isai. lx. 1-6; Ps. lxxi, 10.

They describe the life of the Saviour. He will bring consolation to the afflicted, forgiveness to the sinners, and will announce divine vengeance to the obstinate (Isai. lxi, 1, 2). They foretell his miracles (xxxv, 4-6). They say he would enter Jerusalem poor, and riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass (Zach. ix, 9). Of his passion and death they relate almost all, even the smallest circumstances. The Prophet Zacharias foretells that they would sell him for thirty pieces of silver (xi, 12, 13). The Prophets foretell that his persecutors would strike him, pull out his hair, spit in his face, give him gall and vinegar to drink, pierce his hands and feet, and cast lots for his garment; that those who see him would mock him, and wag their heads, saying, "He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him." Isai. i, 6; Ps. xxi, and lxviii, 22.

The Prophets foretell his resurrection from the dead (Ps. xv, 10), his glorious ascension into heaven (lxvii, 19), and the pouring out of his Spirit upon all flesh (Joel ii, 28), and the institution of a new sacrifice to be offered among all nations and in all places (Mal. i, 10). "And his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people; and it shall break in pieces, and shall consume all these kingdoms; and itself shall stand for ever."

Dan. ii, 43. Let us now draw the conclusion: In Jesus of Nazareth all these prophecies have been fulfilled. Consequently, he is the promised Saviour, the Desired of all nations.

II. THE DOCTRINE AND LIFE OF JESUS.

The tree is known by its fruit. If Jesus was the Son of God, the words flowing from his lips, and his entire life, must show forth their divine character. And thus it is.

1. Jesus Christ has taught the truth which had almost entirely disappeared from this world. His Gospel is the sublimest philosophy. Where is a book containing such sublime ideas about God and the destiny of man? Falsehood and error have been attacking his doctrine for nearly two thousand years, and every fresh attack has only shed fresh glory upon his teaching. The sages of the Old World, invented various beautiful systems of philosophy, but they and their teachings were soon forgotten.

No less perfect is his moral law. The most obstinate infidels must confess it to be incomparable in its beauty, completeness, and sublimity. His enemies, struck with admiration, exclaimed: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Mt. xiii, 55. His doctrine has stood the test of time and experience. The Saviour had exhorted his hearers to live by his doctrine, and they would see that it is from God. Thousands have since earnestly endeavored to conform their lives to the law of the Gospel, and have attained to a perfection, never before witnessed. The law of the Gospel has changed savage nations into civilized people, and destroyed the inhuman customs and laws of pagan civilized nations. Only God can preach such doctrines.

2. The life of Jesus is more than human; *it is divine*. The best of men, the Christian Saints not excepted, had their faults and imperfections. Jesus alone could challenge his bitterest enemies: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" John viii, 46. And overwhelmed with his moral greatness and dignity, they kept their peace.

The plainest way to learn the truth concerning the person of Jesus, will be to ask Himself—Him who was found to be with-

out sin. What does Jesus say of himself? Let us hear his own assertion. "I and the Father are one. Though you will not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." John x, 30, 38. "Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am." viii, 58. "I am the light of the world." v, 12. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." xiv, 6. When Peter professes him the Son of the living God, Jesus calls him blessed. Thomas exclaims: "My Lord and my God!"

I might add that God in heaven confirmed the words of Jesus, proclaiming him his beloved Son at his baptism, and at his transfiguration. But the testimony of Jesus ought to be sufficient. For, either he is what he claims to be, the Son of God and one with God the Father, or he is the worst impostor and vilest of men, making himself God. But his bitterest enemies do not dare call him an impostor, or a wicked man.

The Jewish people, knowing the meaning and import of his words, charged him with having made himself God. The high-priest addressed him in the most solemn manner: "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God." Mt. xxvi, 63. The question was put by the legal authority in form of an oath, demanding an answer. Jesus gives this answer, saying: "Thou hast said it." "Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying: He has blasphemed." v. 65, 66. And Jesus was led to death to seal his assertion by his own blood.

III. THE MIRACLES WROUGHT BY JESUS.

What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? If we had no prophecies, if the words of Jesus had for ever escaped our memory, his *works* would have a decisive answer to the above question.

1. Jesus wrought many and incontrovertable miracles, to prove himself the Lord of nature. He changed water into wine, stilled the waves and the winds; with five loaves he satisfied the hunger of several thousands, healed diseases of all sorts, and

raised the dead to life. He showed himself Lord of the spirits, by casting out devils, and absolute ruler of the human heart, converting great sinners by one word, or his mere presence.

These miracles were not performed in secret, but in public places, in the sight of all people, and in presence of his enemies. They were performed with the intention of leading the world to faith in Him. "Though you will not believe me, believe the works." John x, 38. The Pharisees could not deny the miracles. "What do we, they said; for this man doeth many miracles? If we let him alone so, all men will believe in him." xi, 48. Yet they were wicked enough to attribute these miracles to the devil.

What do the infidels of our days say concerning these miracles? In folly they surpass the Pharisees. Having no courage to deny the facts as related by Holy Scripture, they attribute them to the secret power of nature. These learned gentlemen may have us excused, if we do not believe them, till they by the power of nature raise dead to life, or fill several thousand hungry people with almost nothing, etc. Everyone sees, that as long as the laws upon which God has established this visible world rule, no natural cause can raise the dead, etc. And by performing such stupendous miracles, Jesus has proved himself the Son of God.

2. The greatest miracles, however, were performed by Jesus during his Passion and Death. He accepted of his own free will his sufferings. (Lk. xviii, 31.) When Jesus said, "I am he," the band of men went backward, and fell to the ground. He suffers the most excruciating torments with more than human endurance and patience. In the moment of his death, inanimate nature, as well as Judaism, and Paganism, united in confessing: "Indeed this was the Son of God."

From the moment of death the life of our Saviour was one uninterrupted miracle. In glory he rises from the dead; in glory he converses with his disciples; in glory he ascends into heaven. After his ascension the proud world is converted to

him by twelve poor, illiterate fishermen. And his Church flourishes, whilst mighty empires fell around her:

Peroration: What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? The time will come, when all who believe in the divine nature of Jesus Christ will gather around the Holy Church, the pillar and ground of the faith. On the Last Day our Lord will give the last answer to this question. When he shall come to judge the living and the dead, he will cry out to the trembling world: What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? And all men and angels, the just in jubilation, the reprobate to their own shame, their knees bowed, will answer as if out of one mouth: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Hosanna in the highest."

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

MARKS AND MEANS OF DIVINE CHARITY.

If the love to God is the greatest and the first commandment, it is very important to us to know whether we possess this indispensable virtue, and by what means we may obtain and augment it.

I. THE MARKS OF TRUE DIVINE LOVE.

1. *Sincere joy in God and divine things.* You love God sincerely:

a. If you often and cheerfully think of God, so that you may say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii, 20. If you love your friend sincerely, you will often think of him.

b. If you often and cheerfully speak of him and hear others speak of him. Hence you love God, if you are zealous in praying, in hearing the word of God, in reading books of devotion, etc. "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall always be in my mouth." Ps. xxx, 2.

c. If you often and cheerfully dwell in his presence. Hence you love God, if you often and regularly visit the house of God, attend divine service, receive the Holy Sacraments, etc.

2. *Filial fear of God*, which is manifested :

a. As a *sacred fear* to think, speak, or do, what may displease God. Hence the surest token of our love to God is the conscientious observance of his commandments. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." John xiv, 21.

b. As *zealous endeavor* to please God by promoting his honor in imitating the life of his Son. Hence a life adorned with virtues is a mark of divine life. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." Mt. v, 15.

3. A *sacred reverence* of God and all that is in close relation to him, v. g. the Church, the priests, the word of God, the Holy Sacraments. "Wherefore we, receiving an immovable kingdom, have grace ; whereby let us serve, pleasing God with fear and reverence." Heb. xii, 28.

4. *Active brotherly love*, without which divine love is impossible. "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" I John iv, 20.

II. MEANS OF OBTAINING THE TRUE LOVE OF GOD.

1. *By your understanding :*

a. Endeavor to know God and his perfections more and more, and you will be more convinced of your obligation to love him.

b. Meditate frequently on the vanity of earthly things, that you may detach your heart from them.

c. Compare the benefits received from your parents or friends with those received from God, to see clearly that the former are nothing in comparison with the latter.

d. Examine yourself every night, whether, during the day, you often called to your mind the presence of God, or

whether you thanked him for his benefits by patience, obedience, etc.

2. *By your memory:*

a. Think frequently of God, of his bounty and love to you, of the great promises and happy consequences of a true love toward God, and of the great misery befalling those who do not love their God.

b. Engrave in your memory short suspirations in the words of Holy Scripture, or of the Saints, v. g. I have found whom my soul loveth. My Lord and my God! My God and my all! Persent to your mind the example of the Saints, and endeavor to copy it.

c. Remember not only the benefits received in common with others, but also the particular benefits you have yourself received, as for instance, that God has spared your life after so many grievous sins; that he has given you so many consolations in your grief, etc.

3. *By your heart:*

a. Make frequently an act of love, and strive to work and suffer for the love of God. By repeated acts of love your heart will be more inflamed with this fire of the Holy Ghost.

b. Avoid distractions as much as you are able. Love solicitude, and take a delight in conversing with God.

c. Watch your heart, that its affection for creatures may never equal that for your Heavenly Father.

Peroration: If you should be obliged to confess that your heart is void of the true love of God, employ at least the means of acquiring this most necessary virtue. Although God deserves to be loved without any expectation of reward, he has nevertheless promised us as a reward his beatific vision, his own joy.

Bishop Wagner.

Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

ON INDULGENCE.

“Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Son, be of good heart; thy sins are forgiven thee.” Mt. ix, 2. We are reminded by the Gospel of this day of a doctrine which has been and is still offensive to many professing Christians who are separated from us in faith—the doctrine of indulgence. For it is remarkable that Jesus, seeing the faith of his friends, forgave the sick of the palsy his sins, and the punishment due to them, although they had carried him there for the purpose of having only his bodily disease cured. Is not the Church’s doctrine of indulgence, by which, through the merits of Jesus Christ and his Saints, the temporal punishment, after the forgiveness of the guilt, is remitted, clearly intimated in this miracle? Our Church, in granting indulgences, follows the example of Jesus Christ as set forth in the Gospel. I avail myself of this opportunity to recall to your mind our doctrine on indulgence, and to teach you what is an indulgence, whereon the right of the Church to grant indulgences is founded, and under which conditions we may gain them.

I. WHAT IS AN INDULGENCE?

1. An indulgence is a remission, granted, outside of the Sacrament of Penance, of that temporal punishment which, even after the sin is forgiven, we have yet to undergo, either here or in Purgatory. To understand this definition, it is necessary to know what is temporal punishment of sin.

For each mortal sin we have to suffer an everlasting punishment in hell; whilst each venial sin is punished with temporal punishment, either here by afflictions, misfortunes, etc., or in Purgatory. But besides the eternal punishment, also a temporal punishment is due for mortal sins.

2. It is the clear doctrine of Holy Bible that temporal punishment is awaiting us for our sins. Adam and Eve deserved by their sin the torments of hell, in addition to which God inflicted upon them many temporal evils. Gen. iii, 16-19. Moses, in expiation of his lack of confidence in the Lord, was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. King David heard from the lips of the same prophet who announced to him the forgiveness of his sin, that the son whom he loved so tenderly, should die, and he should have no peace in his own family.

By the divine mercy, the eternal punishment and a part of the temporal punishment are released together with the sin, but seldom all of the temporal punishment. God took away Adam and Eve's sin, and the eternal punishment incurred by their sin, but not the temporal punishment. Moses never lost the friendship of God, and yet temporal punishment was decreed against him. "It is not enough," says St. Chrysostom, "to pull the arrow out of the flesh; the wound caused by the arrow must be healed too. In like manner the wound left after the forgiveness of sins must be cured by penance."

3. In olden times, the Church had decreed certain works of penance for every sin, by performing which the temporal punishment was also remitted. It often happened that, in consequence of the intercession of the martyrs, who applied a part of their merits to the penitent sinner, the time of penance was shortened, the temporal punishment being entirely or partly released. This is indulgence in its primitive form.

When the first zeal of the Christians disappeared, the old severe penitential discipline disappeared also, the Church leaving it to the good will of every individual to give satisfaction for his sins. Yet, partly condescending to the weakness of her children, partly for the purpose of renewing the spirit of penance, the Church by applying the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and his Saints, granted either a plenary or a partial release of the temporal punishment due for sins remitted, on condition of performing certain works of piety.

II. THE RIGHT OF THE CHURCH TO REMIT TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT DUE TO SIN.

Now the question arises: Has the Church a right to remit temporal punishment, and whereon is this right founded?

1. This power has been evidently conferred on the Apostles, when our Saviour gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and to all the Apostles the power of binding and loosing. * * The words by which the Saviour conferred this power, being unrestricted, we have no right to confine them to certain limits. ("Whatever thou shalt loose upon earth," etc. Mt. xvi, 19.) But in consequence of temporal punishment the gates of heaven are shut against you for a time. Moreover, if the Church has the power to remit guilt and eternal punishment, much more has she the power to remit temporal punishment. She who has the power to remit what is greater, has also the power to remit what is less.

The Church continues the mission of Jesus Christ upon earth, for which purpose she received full power. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." John xx, 21. The Father had given to the Son all power, by which he could remit all the consequences of sin. He promised the thief on the cross that "this day" he should be with Him in paradise, thus remitting both sin and its punishment. If the Church had not the power of absolving the sinner from sin, and the consequences thereof, she would not be invested with the full power of Jesus Christ.

2. The Church has been exercising this power ever since her institution. At all ages she has remitted temporal punishment, by the way of grace, or of satisfaction; the form, however, of such indulgences varying with the times and with the wants of the faithful. Thus St. Paul released the punishment imposed upon the Corinthian who was guilty of incest, because he had edified the Corinthian Church by his severe penance. II Cor. ii, 10. During the ages of persecutions, the martyrs frequently wrote from their dungeons commendatory letters in favor of their fallen fellow-Christians (lapsi), it being a general

practice to release the punishment imposed upon them in consideration of the merits of the martyrs. In later times, especially in the age of the crusades, our present form of granting indulgences was adopted.

3. Reason, enlightened by faith, pleads for our doctrine of Indulgences. Does not the redemption of mankind rest on substituting satisfaction? On what else is indulgence founded but on substituting satisfaction? It is surprising, indeed, that the doctrine of Indulgences is the most opposed by those who are separated from us, who charge us with lack of regard for the merits of Jesus Christ. In every society, where charity reigns, the abundance of some supplies the want of others. And in that society whose characteristic mark is charity, ought not the same beneficent law to prevail? There is no Sovereign, no President of a republic, nay, no father of a family, who does not grant indulgences from time to time, by pardoning or shortening due punishments in deference to the intercession of others, or to the high standing and merits of the family of the guilty.

III. CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH INDULGENCES CAN BE GAINED.

We distinguish two kinds of indulgences:—a *plenary*, and a *partial*, indulgence. A *plenary indulgence* is the remission of the whole debt of temporal punishment due to sin; and *partial indulgence* is the remission of a part of it only.

1. We cannot gain indulgences of any kind, unless we are in the state of grace, and have already obtained, by true repentance, forgiveness of those sins, the temporal punishment of which is to be remitted by the Indulgence. For this reason, one of the commonest good works prescribed in order to gain a plenary indulgence, is the reception of the Holy Sacraments of Penance and of the Altar. Besides, it is required that we should exactly perform the good works prescribed for the gaining of the indulgence.

2. God has placed it in our power to deliver the souls of the departed from the flames of purgatory by gaining indulgences for their relief, provided they be such indulgences as the Church

has explicitly declared to be applicable to the souls in purgatory. The Church having no jurisdiction in purgatory, cannot, however, apply indulgences except by the way of suffrage, that is to say, the Holy Church implores God to remit the temporal punishment of the souls in purgatory, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Peroration: If you reflect on your past life, you will see the punishments due to your sins heaped up to the height of mountains. Compare with them your penance! How little have you done to give satisfaction to an inexorable justice! Are you to enter into eternity laden with this burden? Oh! let us endeavor to gain the indulgence so lovingly offered us by the Church! Let us wait no longer! Eternity is approaching rapidly; and whoever shall have neglected to give satisfaction on earth, will be thrown into the prison, whence he will not be delivered, until the last farthing be paid.

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

JESUS CHRIST OUR GREATEST BENEFACTOR.

“Jesus saith to the man sick of the palsy, Arise; take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house.” Mt. ix, 6, 7. Jesus “went about doing good.” Act. x, 38. This eulogium on Jesus was first verified in the land of the Jews where he dwelt in visible human shape, distributing benefits wherever he went. So he healed, according to the Gospel of this day, both the body and soul of the man sick of the palsy. It is verified in all centuries, and in the whole world; for we have received by him the greatest benefits, while those we expect from him for the future, are greater still.

PART I.

WE HAVE RECEIVED BY JESUS CHRIST THREE GOODS OF INDESCRIBABLE VALUE:

1. *True liberty.*

a. *Our liberty was forfeited by Adam.* Being in the state of the noblest liberty, he gave up this precious privilege to

the seducer (Gen iii, 6), under whose bondage he brought himself and his offspring. "For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also is he the slave." II Pet. ii, 19. Mankind endured the most oppressing servitude during four thousand years.

b. Liberty was restored to us by Jesus Christ. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." He has made us free by his victory over hell. "For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil." I John iii, 8; Apoc. xx, 1-3. Satan was forced to give up his prey—the enslaved human race. Jesus has made us free by taking away our sins. "Behold the Lamb of God; behold, he who taketh away the sin of the world." John i, 29. He gave full atonement for the sins of the world, and thus made it possible and easy to every sinner to have the chains of his sins broken. "In him we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins." Col. i, 14.

2. *True dignity.*

a. Our highest dignity was forfeited by Adam. Endowed with royal dignity, he lived in Paradise, a friend and favorite of God, whose intimate familiarity he enjoyed. But he deprived himself of this dignity, bowing under the yoke of Satan.

b. This our former dignity was restored to us by Jesus Christ. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law; that he might redeem those who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv, 4. "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be named and should be the sons of God." I John iii, 1. Divine filiation is the highest dignity which can be conferred upon a creature. "Great is the mystery of this grace, and all graces are surpassed by this grace, God calling man his son, and man calling God his Father." St. Leo.

3. *True riches.*

a. Adam made us poor.

The first man was endowed with the most precious supernatural gifts. With sin they were all lost. Our proto-parent

found himself naked and deprived of all those goods not due to his nature, thus bequeathing to his children nothing but poverty and misery.

b. Jesus Christ made us rich again.

He communicated to us his *merits*, an infinite treasure! They are applied to us, especially in the Holy Sacrifice, and by the Holy Sacraments. Let us approach this infinite fountain of divine blessing.

Moreover, he gave us his *heart*, which is an open treasure to every one of us in our needs. Thus every act of charity becomes worthy of eternal reward. "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, Amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." Mt. x, 42.

PART II.

GREATER STILL ARE THE GOODS WE HOPE TO OBTAIN BY JESUS CHRIST.

1. *A happy death.*

Our Saviour has conquered death, and has by his death gained for us the grace of a happy death. "He is on the right hand of God, swallowing up death, that we might become heirs of life everlasting." I Pet. iii, 22. "Ever since our Saviour has deigned to drink the cup of Passion and Death, it is filled with sweetness and consolation for the friends of God, and contains no longer bitterness." St. Francis of Sales. A happy death is no doubt the best allotment of man, it is "repose, a quiet harbor, deliverance from all disturbance and the cares of life." St. Chrysostom.

2. *A glorious resurrection.*

The Lord said of himself: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live." John xi, 25. "The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life." John v, 29. Therefore we hope for our resurrection through

him. This resurrection will be exceedingly glorious. "He will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory." Philip. iii, 21. The true children of God, our father, mother, brother and sister will rise from the grave in the glorified state, and meet us. Who can depict the joy of meeting again in the state of glory!

3. *Everlasting happiness.*

Jesus Christ has promised us this happiness. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven." Mt. v, 12. "I appoint to you, as my Father hath appointed to me, a kingdom." Lk. xxii, 29. He will keep his promise. He will, on the day of judgment, gather all his faithful from the ends of the world, and lead them into the glory of heaven. "The just shall go into life everlasting." Mt. xxv, 46. This life everlasting is "a stream of delight, a powerful, overflowing stream of joy, a stream of glory, a stream of peace." St. Bernard. Who is able to describe the joys of the elect!

Peroration: Jesus Christ is then our greatest benefactor. Therefore, *a*, engrave his name indelibly on your souls. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Act iv, 12. *b*. Thank him every day for his mercies. "Give glory to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." Ps. cvi, 1. *c*. Never be ashamed of confessing your faith in him. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i, 16. *d*. Keep his commandments as long as life shall last. "This is charity, that we walk according to his commandments." II John, 6.

J. Schuen.

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

THE HELL OF THE CHRISTIAN.

Hell is to every condemned soul the everlasting evil, an unquenchable sea of fire, everlasting privation of God, perpetual despair. Contrasting, however, the hell of the infidel with that of the Christian, the hell of the condemned Christian is incomparably more painful. A dreadful, yet well-founded thought, and therefore worthy of our earnest reflection.

The hell of the Christian is far more dreadful

I. ON ACCOUNT OF THE FAITH WHICH HE ONCE PROFESSED.

This grace, which was refused to so many, is to him

1. *The cause of great infamy.* Alas! Who is able to comprehend and express the unbearable infamy!

a. A *Catholic* in hell! He upon whom the light of truth had shone, and to whom the way of salvation was opened from the beginning of his life, chose the ways and works of darkness!

b. A *child of God* and temple of the Holy Ghost, now a thrall of Satan, through his own wickedness.

c. The *seal of God* has been changed to a brand of eternal reprobation. This indelible character imprinted by baptism and confirmation on the soul of the disciple and soldier of Jesus Christ, to be his magnificent ornament in heaven, will blaze on his perjured soul in hell, instigate the devils to renewed wrath, excite the unbaptized reprobate to cursing and reviling, a far more shocking ignominy than that the seventy princes had to suffer from their proud conqueror Adonibezec, who said: "Seventy kings having their fingers and toes cut off, gathered up the leaving of the meat under my table." Judges i, 7.

2. *The cause of greater punishment*, since punishment ought to be in proportion to the crime, which, when committed by the Christian, is the more grievous on account of his faith and dig-

nity. "Woe to thee Corozain, woe to thee Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon the mighty works had been done that have been done in you, they would long ago have done penance in sack-cloth and ashes," etc. Mt. xi, 21, 24.

II. ON ACCOUNT OF THE GRACE BY WHICH HE WAS STRENGTHENED.

For, the Catholic Christian

1. *Receives more graces* than infidels and heretics. Although I readily concede that God who wills that all men be saved, does not withdraw from infidels the ordinary graces, and sometimes confers on them even extraordinary graces, yet incomparably more graces and of greater efficacy are imparted to the Christian, as for instance :

a. The outward and more general means of salvation : education, instruction, advice by the pastors of souls, good examples, etc.

b. The means of salvation committed to the Holy Church : sacrifice of Mass, sacraments, intercessions, festival days, and days of penance.

c. The special inward graces, as inspirations to the just, the weak and the sinner.

2. *Is more severely punished* for abusing these graces :

a. By God, whose justice will deal with the ungrateful Christian in proportion as he has received graces. "That servant who knew the will of his lord, and hath not prepared himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Lk. xii, 46, 48.

b. *By his own conscience*, which will remind him of all the graces offered to him, and by him despised or abused ; and did of his many sins and crimes, which he committed, when he ought to have listened to the sweet voice of God.

III. ON ACCOUNT OF THE GLORY WHICH WAS PREPARED FOR HIM.

For he was called to possess with the Blessed the kingdom of the Father prepared for them from the foundation of the

world. But instead of reaching this happiness, he feels his heart tormented

1. *With grim envy* at the joy of the Blessed, who had no greater right, no stronger graces, no easier duties, no less temptations, and were perhaps once greater sinners than he himself. This torment is somewhat represented to our mind

a. By the sad complaint of the Prodigal Son, who felt his misery the most when comparing himself with the hired servants in his father's house. Lk. xv, 17. Who shall describe the vain rage of the condemned Christian, when he contrasts his condition in the fiery abyss with that of the Elect in the house of their heavenly Father, where they enjoy the imperishable inheritance, whilst he has lost his rightful inheritance in exchange for a handful of earthly dust? "The wicked shall see, and shall be angry: he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away; the desire of the wicked shall perish." Ps. cxi, 10.

b. The heart-rending confession of the condemned themselves, as it is described Wisd. v, 2 ff. St. Antoninus remarks: "The reprobate envy the Blessed their glory, and those who in their lifetime were their friends and relations; and their perversity is so great as to wish them all condemned with them. And this envious jealousy knows of no limits."

2. *With fruitless sorrow over the loss of heaven*, to which he was so well entitled by faith and baptism and the participation of the body of Jesus Christ. John iii, 18; vi, 59.

a. Because he was indifferent to heaven or preferred sinful desires to eternal happiness, therefore he cannot banish, in punishment, the thought of the lost good.

b. He still has an incessant desire for happiness; but his desire cannot be fulfilled. He sees now, when it is too late, that God alone was his last end, and that life without him is incessant death. Vide Lk. xvi, 26. Esau "roared," although there was yet a second blessing left for him. The Prodigal Son could console himself with the resolution to return to his father. But to the condemned Christian there is no return, no father's house, no mercy left, but "the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii, 36. Cf. Apoc. vi, 15-17.

Peroration: Let us then in thanksgiving for our vocation to the true faith make conscientious use of the divine graces and times of grace, and lead such a life, that we may be justified in saying at the hour of our death: O Lord, thou hast granted me the right for heaven at the beginning of my life. Behold, now is the time to take possession of it.

Bordoni.

IV.

ALTHOUGH ALL MANKIND IS INVITED, NOT ALL PARTAKE OF THE BANQUET.

“The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son.” Mt. xxii, I. The king mentioned in the Gospel is the Lord God, who espoused the Church to his only-begotten Son. The splendid, never-ending supper, is given in heaven, surpassing all our preconceptions. Of this St. Paul writes: “The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.” I Cor. ii, 9. St. Augustine writes of it: “Our food is justice, our drink is wisdom, our garment, immortality, our abode is heaven.” And the guests, who are they? Let us see.

PART I.

WHO ARE INVITED?

All men are invited, for

1. God has destined all men that they should partake of everlasting happiness, as we are taught

a. *By the words of Holy Scripture.* As the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine in the mountains, and goeth to that which is gone astray, “even so it is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” Mt. xviii, 14. “God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” I Tim. ii, 4.

b. By the mission of the Son of God. God gave his Son for all, and the salvation of all. "He hath spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Rom. viii, 32. "God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him." John iii, 17.

2. Jesus, by his passion, has merited salvation for all of us.

It is doctrine of faith that the death of Jesus has been an expiation for the whole world, i. e. that by his death it has been made possible for all men to attain eternal salvation. "As by the offence of one, unto all men to condemnation, so also by the justice of one, unto all men unto justification of life." Rom. v, 18. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." I John ii, 2.

All mankind then are invited to partake of the banquet in heaven. However poor, and despised by men you may be, the Heavenly King extended his invitation to you to be one of his guests.

PART II.

NOT ALL, ALTHOUGH INVITED, WILL PARTAKE OF THE BANQUET.

"Many (i. e. the many, or all) are invited, but few are chosen." Mt. xxii, 14. If you desire to be admitted to the marriage feast, it is required:

1. *That your lamp should be kept burning.*

Parable of the ten virgins. Mt. xxv. Only those who were ready, having their lamps trimmed, "went in with him to the marriage." Mt. xxv, 12. The burning lamp signifies:

a. The true faith.

It is an indispensable condition of our salvation. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be condemned." Mt. xvi, 16. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi, 6. He who wilfully or in a well-founded doubt adheres to a false faith, or who exter-

nally professes the true faith, whilst his heart does not assent to its teachings, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

b. Practical faith.

“If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” I Cor. xiii, 2. “Faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.” James ii, 17. “Faith if it have not works, is dead, as the blossom is dead, if it bring no fruit.” (St. Bernard.) Dead faith will not lead you to salvation, but only faith enlivened by good works. “Not every one that saith to me; Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Mt. vii, 31.

2. The wedding garment.

“The king went in to see the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Having bound his hands and feet, cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Mt. xxii, 11. What is meant by the wedding garment?

a. The garment of innocence.

By baptism we received the justifying grace and the right of heaven. “As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ.” Gal. iii, 27. “According to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom he hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Tit. iii, 5. To him, consequently, who preserves the garment of grace untarnished, which in baptism was brought down from heaven by holy angels, the gates of heaven are opened, that he be present at the nuptials of the Lamb. Raise up your spiritual eyes toward heaven, and behold millions clad in this beautiful wedding garment: children and parents, priests and their glory—the souls once confided to their care.

Will you be of their number? You will, if you put on the garment of penance.

b. The garment of penance.

By penance sin is blotted out, and the prodigal son let back into his father's embrace. (Conc. Trid. sess. 14, cap. 3.) Parable of the Prodigal Son. Innumerable Christians whose souls were cleansed from sin by tears of penance, are now guests at the nuptials of the Lamb, their number increasing daily.

Peroration: Let us then preserve our faith, and perform the works of faith! If you be yet so happy as to possess the garment of innocence, guard it with the solicitude of a mother watching her only child. But if you be of the unhappiest of men who wear the garment of sin, the livery in Satan's service, delay not one day doing sincere penance. There is no other way which leads to the festivities in heaven.

Joseph Schuen.

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

BAD EXAMPLE OF PARENTS.

The ruler was happy in seeing his son first cured, and then believing in Jesus. This was the result of the father's seeking help from Jesus, and of his good example in the matter of faith. In contrast therewith I pity those parents who, although in many cases it is through their own fault, see their children miserable in body and soul. Although many parents neglect to exhort their children to virtue by kind and earnest words, yet the most frequent cause of the children's perversity is the bad example of the parents. Let me warn you, Christian parents, never to set a bad example to your children.

I. BAD EXAMPLE IS MOST PERNICIOUS IN ITS RESULTS.

However good the education of children may be, the bad example of the parents invariably occasions

1. *Certain injury,*

a. On account of the imitative instinct in children. It is their nature to imitate whatever they observe in adults. Examples.

b. On account of their great susceptibility of good and bad impressions, and of the bad more than of the good.

c. On account of the authority of the parents, by which children are induced to regard as allowed whatever they see done by them. *Exempla trahunt.*

2. *Terrible injury*, which cannot be compensated by anything else. Hence, in consequence of bad example, children are deprived

a. Of virtue, to implant which all other means are employed in vain, since virtue is rendered much more difficult of attainment after sin having been imbibed.

b. Of temporal prosperity; of which, virtue, a good conscience, and the divine blessing are the principal pillars.

c. Of eternal salvation, which bad children will not obtain. What does it avail, if parents toil hard day and night in behalf of their children? Is this treble injury compensated thereby?

3. *An irreparable damage.*

a. When once the innocence of children has been lost, who can restore it? Never can that be given back to them, although they should become converted.

b. Conversion itself, however, is very problematic, because of the power of a habit contracted. It would have been an easy task to accustom your children to virtue, whilst it is almost impossible to lead children, when once spoiled, back to the right path. Custom becomes second nature.

c. Perverse children often contaminate their companions, and are the cause of wickedness for generations to come.

II. BAD EXAMPLE IS LIABLE TO SEVERE PUNISHMENT.

1. *It is an outrage on God and religion.* "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8. God has created your children for virtue, and redeemed them through the blood of Jesus. Parents unmindful of their duties toward their children deprive God of human souls, which are so precious to him; they estrange them from the Church and the means of grace administered by her; and deprive them of everlasting happiness. What a responsibility!

2. *It is a gross violation of our general duties.*

a. "Woe to the world because of scandals!" Mt. xviii, 7. If any kind of scandal is severely punished, how much more that of scandalizing children! God will revenge their innocent blood with such severity, that "it were better for him (the seducer) that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." v. 6.

3. *It is a gross violation of their special duties as parents.*

a. They sin against their own children. If Jesus threatens all those who scandalize any of the little ones, how punish-

ble are those who scandalize such children, as are confided to their special care and edifying example! If thieves breaking into their neighbor's house are severely punished, how great should be the punishment of the watchman who steals what has been intrusted to him, that he should protect it against thieves!

b. If to scandalize one child is so great an outrage, still grosser must be that of scandalizing a whole family and neighborhood.

Peroration: The ruler himself believed, and his whole house. I wish to God that all parents would set so good an example before their children, that the whole house, by following them, might be saved!

Bishop Galura.

IV.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION.

"Sir, come down before that my son die." John iv, 49. As Jesus was invited by the ruler to come down and heal his son, so the ministers of Jesus are invited by Christians to come down and heal their sick sons, daughters, parents, etc., from the disease of sin by the Holy Sacraments. Our Saviour instituted a special Sacrament for the sick and dying—"Extreme Unction"—the reception of which should never be neglected, as it has a great healing power as regards both the soul and body. Let me recall to your memory the motives that should induce you in time of dangerous illness to receive this Holy Sacrament.

I. *We are exhorted by Holy Scripture to receive it.*

1. Some divines call our attention to the triple anointment of David, the servant of the Lord, as a figure of a triple anointment of the Christian. David was first anointed in the house of his father; we were first anointed at the baptismal font, being made heirs to the future heavenly kingdom. David received

in Hebron his second anointment as king of Juda, after which he had to endure many sufferings and struggles. We were, by the Sacrament of Confirmation, anointed a second time as soldiers of Jesus Christ, to resist the temptations of our enemies, and to endure the hardships of life. David was anointed a third time king of all Israel, after which he reigned in peace. By the third anointment, in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, we receive strength to make our last journey into eternity in peace, and there to take possession of the kingdom to which we received the title by our first anointment in baptism.

2. Jesus himself prefigured this Holy Sacrament, when by his power his disciples "anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them." Mk. vi, 13. In a similar way the Sacrament of baptism was prefigured by the baptism of John the Precursor; the Holy Eucharist, by satisfying the hunger of the multitude with five loaves.

3. We are exhorted by St. James, in express terms, to receive this Holy Sacrament (v, 14): "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." St. James speaks here of a Sacrament, not of the special gift of healing the sick. For he mentions the anointing of the sick as an ordinary and daily performance, whereas the gift of healing the sick was something quite extraordinary, not conferred upon every priest. Besides, he mentions the forgiveness of sins as the effect of this anointment, which was certainly not obtained in consequence of healing the sick.

II. We should be induced to receive this Holy Sacrament on account of the *beneficial effects* produced by it in our soul.

1. *It removes the remains of sins already forgiven.*

These remains are:

a. A certain uneasiness, fear, and sadness, which befalls the soul

At the prospect of death. Aristotle calls death the most terrible of all terrors; and our Lord himself, when he looked death in the face, "began to grow sorrowful and to be sad," wherefore he was strengthened by an angel. By the Sacrament of Extreme Unction the sick Christian is strengthened, in order to bear the sufferings caused by his disease, and to face death with a quiet mind. This effect is signified by the visible sign of the Sacrament, since oil is often mentioned in Holy Scripture as refreshing the body.

At the prospect of the judgment. By this Holy Sacrament a great confidence in the Divine Mercy is conferred on the soul, as the council of Trent teaches. Thus the Church, by administering Extreme Unction, acts the parts of the Samaritan. Lk. x.

At the prospect of the temptations by the devil, who is come down, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Apoc. xii, 12. For this reason even Saints were struck with fear at the dreadful moment. But by this holy Sacrament the Christian receives the power to overcome these temptations. "The Lord shall raise him up," as the Apostle says.

b. The sins which were not yet remitted, are remitted by this Sacrament, if the sick person has imperfect contrition (attrition). Mortal sins are forgiven, if confession be impossible, and venial sins are forgiven, although confession were possible. "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." This effect is intimated by the words, in which the holy Sacrament is administered: "Through this holy unction and through his most tender mercy may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing, hearing, smelling, by taste and speech, by touch and by walking."

3. Temporal punishments due for sins already forgiven, are partly or completely, according to the disposition of the soul, released, so that through this Sacrament the punishment in Purgatory is either shortened or entirely removed. The oil of the Samaritan had a healing power also.

2. *The second is this:*

a. *Bodily health is restored*, if it be good for the sick person. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick man." How often are we priests witnesses of recovery commencing immediately after the reception of this Sacrament! St. Bernard relates in the life of St. Malachias, that he once recalled to life a woman, and then restored her health through Extreme Unction. We cannot expect this effect except by "the prayer of faith" or confidence, and if we send for the priest in time.

b. *A happy death is procured*, since Extreme Unction has a great part in preserving the graces received in the other sacraments, as the light is kept shining by means of oil.

Peroration: Let us then in case of dangerous sickness receive the Sacrament instituted for the benefit of the sick, that true peace may be imparted to our soul, and she may go forth in peace from this world, in the name of God the Father Almighty, who created her; in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for her; in the name of the Holy Ghost, who was poured out upon her.

M. Faber.

All-Saints.

III.

VENERATION OF THE RELICS OF THE SAINTS.

We Catholics honor not only the Saints, but also their relics, by which we understand partly their sacred bodies or parts thereof, as the bodies of the holy martyrs, partly inanimate objects that had some relation to the Saints in their lifetime, as their clothes, the instruments of their torture, etc.

We are right in venerating the relics of the Saints.

1. *God himself has honored them*, by performing miracles through them :

a. In the Old Testament. Moses wrought great miracles through his staff as his instrument. Exodus vii. "Elias took his mantle and folded it together, and struck the waters; and they were divided hither and thither: and they both passed over on dry ground." IV Kings ii, 8. A dead body was cast into the sepulchre of Eliseus. "And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life, and stood upon his feet." xiii, 21.

b. At the times of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, touched the hem of Jesus' garment, and was made whole from that hour. Mt. ix, 20. "They brought out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities." Act. v, 15. "And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul; so that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them." Act. xix, 11.

c. In early Christendom. The miracles wrought through relics of Saints were so numerous that St. Chrysostom said, he would come to no end, if he attempted to enumerate them. St.

Augustine mentions that a blind woman by touching her eyes with the flowers that had been laid on the relics of St. Stephen the Protomartyr, recovered instantaneously the light of her eyes. He has also recorded that a blind man, in presence of a multitude as witnesses, was healed through the relics of the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius. St. Ambrose relates many miracles performed through the relics of the same Saints.

d. During the later centuries up to our times. The hand of St. Stephen, king of Hungary, is still unhurt by the tooth of time. So is the tongue of St. John of Nepomuc; the heart of St. Theresa; the body of St. Francis Xavier and of many other Saints. In the year 1787 St. Alphonsus Liguori died from the dreadful malady of cancer. A lady struck with the same disease, whose recovery was despaired of, was suddenly healed through a picture laid on the body of the Saint.

2. *The holy Church has ever honored the relics of the Saints.*

This is witnessed:

a. By the Holy Fathers. "We honor the relics of the martyrs, as we adore Him whose own the martyrs are." St. Jerome. St. Gregory of Nyssa says that at his times the faithful kissed the bodies of the Saints, as if they were still alive and fresh, and invoked the martyrs as if they were present.

b. By heretics and Gentiles. The heretic Vigilantius writes mockingly: "The Catholics light large candles in bright day, and are intent upon kissing and adoring a handful of dust, by which, undoubtedly, they render a great service to those martyrs." Eunapius, the Sophist, reproaches the Christians with adoring the martyrs, being very solicitous concerning their bodies, placing them beneath the altars, and treating them, as if they were gods.

c. How great this solicitude was, we may infer from the fact, that the bones of the martyrs were collected and preserved with great care and in many cases even at great expense. Moreover, churches and altars were built above the tombs of the martyrs.

3. *Reason itself gives its approval.*

a. *The bodies of the Saints* have been temples of the Holy Ghost, who, by imparting his grace, had made an abode in them. Cf. I Cor. vi, 19. God honors and will one day glorify them by raising them to life, reuniting them with their bodies, and transplanting them into heaven. And have men no right to honor those whom God honors in so conspicuous a manner?

b. *Other relics of the Saints*, as their clothes, etc., are also worthy of our homage. For God has often through them bestowed benefits on mankind, thus demanding the veneration of the faithful. Besides, are not such objects, as belonged to great men, or to our parents and friends, preserved as dearest souvenirs? Why then should the same things, which once belonged to the Saints, not be dear and venerable to us?

Peroration: Let me in conclusion show how utterly futile are the objections raised against the veneration of the relics of the Saints.

1. "God concealed the body of Moses that it should not be venerated."

God did so, because by that time the Jews were very prone to idolatry. In order, therefore, to prevent the adoration of the bones of Moses as something divine, God concealed them. That this is the true explanation, follows clearly from the fact that after the Babylonian captivity God himself glorified the sepulchres of the prophets Isaias and Jeremias, and thus approved the homage paid to their bones.

2. "Many of the so-called relics of the Saints are spurious." We answer: the council of Trent has prohibited relics to be exposed for public veneration without the approval of the bishop; by which precaution sufficient provision is made against the veneration of spurious relics. Moreover, it is always the intention of the faithful to venerate the relics of a certain Saint. Consequently, if the relics before them should be spurious, their attention is not directed toward them.

3. Christ himself says: "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who build the sepulchres of the prophets, and adorn the monuments of the just." Mt. xxiii, 29.

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, because they contented themselves with this external homage, and neglected the virtues of the soul.

Let us then venerate the relics of the Saints, and by so doing, be moved to follow their holy example.

Wiser.

IV.

THE FOLLOWING OF THE SAINTS.

There is no better way to venerate the Saints than by following their example. Yet it is a sad fact, that Christians are not intent upon following the friends of God, partly because they try to persuade themselves that it is impossible, partly because they suppose that it is not necessary, in order to get to heaven. In opposition to this two-fold error, I assert that 1, we are able, 2, we are in duty bound, to follow the Saints.

I. WE ARE ABLE TO FOLLOW THE SAINTS.

1. For, *the Saints were subject to the same frailties* as are we. "The imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth," said God, after the deluge of all men. "The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh weak." Mt. xxvi, 41.

2. *The same obstacles lay in their way:*

a. *On the part of the world*, that hated and persecuted them. "You shall be hated by all men for my name's sake; but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." Mt. x, 22. "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." John xv, 20.

b. *On the part of the flesh* that revolted against their spirit. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." Gal. v, 17. "Every man is tempted, being drawn away by his own concupiscence, and allured." James i, 14.

c. *On the part of Satan*, who tempted them. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." Lk. xxii, 31. "Our wrestling is not (only) against flesh and blood;

but against principalities and powers ; against the rulers of the world of this darkness ; against the spirits of wickedness in the high places." Eph. vi, 12.

3. *They had the same means of salvation as we have :*

a. *Faith.* "Believe in the Lord Jesus ; and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Act. xvi, 31. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" I John v, 5 ; Cf. Heb. xi.

b. *Patience.* "Patience is necessary for you ; that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. x, 36. "In your patience you shall possess your souls." Lk. xxi, 19.

c. *The Word of God.* "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths." Ps. cxviii, 105. "The word of God is living and effectual, and more penetrating than any two-edged sword." Heb. iv, 12.

d. *The grace of God*, which the Saints strove to obtain by worthy reception of the Holy Sacraments, and by the performance of good works, and with which they faithfully co-operated. "By the grace of God I am what I am ; and his grace in me hath not been void ; but I have labored more abundantly than all they ; yet not I, but the grace of God with me." I Cor. xv, 10. "He who created thee without thee, will not save thee without thee." St. Augustine. Besides, how many are those Saints who, living in the midst of the vicious Gentiles, have had to face more and greater perils, caused by scandal, scorn, and persecution, and possessed fewer means of salvation, than we living in the proximity of churches, assisted by our priests, and having been trained in Catholic schools, etc.

II. WE ARE OBLIGED TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE SAINTS.

For there is for us :

1. *No other heaven.*

a. There is one and the same crown of justice and of life for all. "For the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me at that day ; and not to me only, but to them also who love his coming."

II Tim. iv, 8. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love him." James i, 12. •

δ. He that will not be set on the right hand, will be set on the left. "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand ; but the goats on the left." Mt. xxv, 33.

2. *No other Gospel.* "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Eph. iv, 5. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." Gal. i, 8.

3. *No other Christ.* "I am the way and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me." John iv, 6. "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." Gal. i, 8.

Peroration: Let us then follow the Saints. "Si potuerunt hi et hae, cur non et ego?" St. Augustine. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God." Heb. xii, 14. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." I Thess. iv, 3.

Tirinus.

Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

FRUIT OF CONFESSION.

“The Lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, let him go, and forgave him the debt.” Mt. xviii, 27. The servant burdened with debt, falling down at the feet of his royal master, besought him saying: “Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” Mt. xviii, 26. The poor wretch could never be able to pay the debt of ten thousand talents. The king being moved with compassion, performed a rare act of mercy, and “forgave him the debt.” Is not by this parable the mercy, which God shows to the sinner in the Sacrament of Penance, vividly depicted? Burdened with an immense debt, man approaches the confessional, imploring divine mercy, and obtains perfect forgiveness. Let us then meditate on this blessed fruit of confession.

PART I.

BY CONFESSION ALL GUILT IS REMITTED.

1. *Sins are forgiven.*

a. Jesus Christ conferred upon the Church the power of forgiving sins.

“Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven.” Mt. xviii, 18. “Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.” John xx, 23.

b. The Church exercises this power in the Sacrament of Penance.

Such is the doctrine of the Council of Trent. Sess. xiv, Cap. 1, and Can. 3. Sins are then forgiven in the confessional, since the priest is endowed with divine power to reconcile souls to God, and to heal their wounds. St. Chrysostom writes accordingly: “The priests have received a power such as God

has conferred neither on angels nor on archangels; for to them it has not been said: Whatsoever you will bind or loose," etc.

2. *All sins, the gravest not excepted, are forgiven.*

a. Such is the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

He says not: You cannot forgive but little trespasses; no, he says: "Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth," (Mt. xviii, 18), and "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." John xx, 23. Consequently the power is unlimited.

b. It is the doctrine of the Church.

Ever since the earliest times the Church has reconciled the greatest sinners with God, though she has tried many of them for some time, in order to ascertain whether they were worthy of this grace. Nor did she ever approve of the austerity of some few priests, who refused absolution to a certain class of sinners on their death-bed. "Those who excluded adulterers from penance, acted in a wicked manner, because they refused to heal the members of Jesus Christ, and withdrew the keys of the Church from those who knocked at her door." St. Augustine.

However great, therefore, the guilt may be, it is remitted by confession. Never despair. Jesus Christ is anxious to wash your soul in his precious blood, that she may shine in angelic beauty. Make your confession, and a good confession. Then the word of the Lord will be fulfilled in you: "I have blotted out thy iniquities as a cloud, and thy sins as a mist." Isai. xlv, 22.

PART II.

ALL FAVORS ARE CONFERRED.

1. *God pours out his peace into your heart.*

Sin is followed by inner misery and reproaches of conscience. "The sinner carries his tormenter within himself, tormenting him continually." St. Chrysostom. But a good confession is succeeded by peace, since you are quieted in regard to the past, knowing yourself to be reconciled with God, and in regard to the future, since you received hope of a happy death and

a lenient judgment. Thus peace is poured into your soul, such as God alone can give, and "which surpasseth all understanding." Philip iv, 7.

2. *God pours out his grace into your heart.*

By the Sacrament of penance the sinner is justified (Conc. Trid. Sess. vi, cap. 14), and his soul adorned with sanctifying grace. Thus man becomes

a. *A beloved child of the Heavenly Father.*

Man in the state of sin displeases God. But grace invests him with the nuptial garment, so that the Most High recognizes in him his child, and holds the heavenly crown ready for him as his inheritance. "If sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii, 17.

• b. *A living member of Jesus Christ.*

In his sin man was a dead branch of the Vine Jesus Christ. After confession new life pervades his soul. He is now a living branch, incessantly producing fruits of life. The least actions, which he performs, are meritorious for eternity. The cup of cold water. Mt. x, 42.

c. *A temple of the Holy Ghost.*

The human heart, when in the state of sin, is laden with the curse of God, and so deformed as to be the object of abomination before God and his angels. But by grace it is made so beautiful, that the Holy Ghost descending from heaven, takes his abode in it as in his temple. "Or know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?" I Cor. vi, 19.

Peroration: Does it not seem that God's omnipotence and charity make every effort, so to say, to reward our humble confession? Who then would not be willing to receive frequently the Sacrament of Penance? Or do you prefer to carry about the gnawing worm in your soul, and to fear at any moment to be cast into the flames of hell? "Whoever takes care of his soul, let him not be ashamed to confess his sins to the Superior (priest), that he may be healed." St. Clement of Rome Epist. ii, ad Cor.

J. Schuen.

IV.

ABUSE OF DIVINE MERCY.

“Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?” Mt. xviii, 33. The wicked servant, far from making the above conclusion, made the following inference: The king being so kind and merciful, I myself may be wicked, without having to fear his wrath; an inference as foolish as it was detrimental. The rash sinner continues to offend God on the same grounds. Because God is infinitely merciful, I dare to sin. But his reasoning is just as senseless and ungrateful as the reasoning of the wicked servant.

I. IT IS SENSELESS.

Whoever reasons in the above manner, is evidently dazzled by Satan himself.

1. God is *kind and merciful*. And what follows from this truth?

a. If God were not merciful, if he were severe and merciless, there would be some sense in saying, Therefore I cannot love him. Thus a servant who offended a rough master may find some excuse.

b. But since God is really merciful, how senseless is it to say: For this very reason I hate and offend him. What would you say of a servant who grieves, hates, and reviles his master, and threatens to leave his service *for the very reason that he is such a kind master?*

2. We should remember that *God is infinitely just, also*. The sinner says: I do not offend God, *because* he is merciful; I only hope for forgiveness because of his mercy. There might be some sense in it, if God's bounty and mercy were not inseparable from his justice. But that divine mercy and justice are inseparable, we know

a. From *history*. How kind was God towards the angels, whom he endowed so richly! Still he rejected them. Remem-

ber the punishment of our first parents, the deluge, the rain of fire in hell and purgatory. And all those punished in so dreadful a manner cannot deny that God is infinitely kind and merciful.

b. From *Holy Writ*, which "always joins divine justice with divine mercy." St. Basil. "The Lord is merciful and just." Ps. cxiv, 5. "He is merciful, and compassionate, and just." Ps. cxi, 4.

3. *The right conclusion* would then be this: "Because the Lord is patient, we will do penance and implore his mercy." Therefore "nothing is more foolish than to use divine longanimity and patience to commit sins." St. Augustine.

Comparison. No one is so foolish as to say: I am acquainted with an excellent physician, wherefore I will inflict a serious wound on my own body, because he will cure me. No one reasons in this way, because

a. This hope might be frustrated, and

b. Even if you were cured, you would have sustained a considerable loss, anyhow.

II. IT IS UNGRATEFUL.

"Let us not say, I have done it yesterday, and God has spared me; I do it to-day, and God spares me; I will do it to-morrow, because God will spare me." St. Augustine. Such language would be very ungrateful.

1. *This ingratitude is manifest*, since

a. The greatest benefactor is offended. How utterly void of all gratitude is he who says: "I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?" Ecclus. v, 4. God could have cast me into poverty, death, and hell; but instead he honored me, prolonged my life, etc., and in recompense I will offend him.

b. The benefit itself is proclaimed as the motive of offence. Because the sinner has experienced so often the mercies of the Lord, he is encouraged to commit more sins. "They become cruel in consequence of the mercy of the Lord." St. Peter Chrys. Do you not call this dishonoring divine mercy?

c. The design of divine mercy is frustrated. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and patience, and long-suffering? knowest thou not that the benignity of God *leadeth thee to penance?*" Rom. ii, 4.

2. The number of these ungrateful Christians is great indeed.

a. The principles so frequently uttered bear the stamp of this ingratitude, as for instance: Man is young only once. Let us enjoy life. If it be as the priests say, I shall meet many companions in hell, etc.

b. We see works performed which no one would ever venture to perpetrate, if reprobation were certain instantaneously to succeed them; and yet these evil deeds are committed, because they have not as yet been punished.

III. IT IS A FORETOKEN OF ETERNAL CONDEMNATION.

1. *For it implies a peculiar wickedness.* Whoever abuses love that is to render him happy for ever, deserves to be pursued by hatred, that will render him unhappy for ever.

a. It is the black deed of a traitor, odious even to barbarous nations, to offend your friend, because you know him to be kind and generous. It is the deed of Judas.

b. It is a consenting to the designs of Satan. God says to you: I am merciful; therefore become not despondent, but become converted. And I am just also; therefore sin no more, that you may not be lost for ever. Satan whispers into your ears: Go on, and commit sins; for God is bounty itself and is anxious to forgive. And after the evil deed is committed, he says: You are not able to work true penance; God is just; you are lost for ever.

2. *Salvation is improbable* on account of this great wickedness:

a. On the part of the sinner. He who once dares to make it his custom to sin by presumption of God's mercy, will soon become accustomed to draw the same conclusion without exception, so that he will finally die in his sins.

b. On the *part of God*, who never promised to be propitious to those who are so presumptuous, but only to those who would be truly converted to him. "According to the height of the heaven above the earth, he hath strengthened his mercy towards them that *fear him*." Ps. cii, 11. Cf. Verse 13. "His mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear him." Lk. i, 50. Cf. Eccclus. xvii, 28. "Say not: The mercy of the Lord is great: he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from him, and his wrath looketh upon sinners." Eccclus. v, 6.

3. *It is a sin against the Holy Ghost*, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Mt. xii, 32. He who sins by presumption of God's mercy, deprives himself of all fitness for divine mercy, confesses without contrition and resolution, nay with the resolution to sin again. It is the "sin unto death." I John v, 16.

"Inordinate confidence may move God to vengeance, but never to mercy." St. Gregory the Great.

Bordoni.

Twenty-Second Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

LOSS OF THE DIVINE IMAGE IN OUR SOULS.

“Whose image and inscription is this? They say unto him : Cæsar’s. Then he saith to them : Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s ” Mt. xxii, 20. As we have to give to those who hold the reins of the government the current coin as tribute, so we have to give to God our own selves. For man is, in the words of St. Augustine, God’s penny. In accordance therewith we say at the intelligence of our friend’s death, He returned his soul. Suppose, now, you were to return to God your soul deprived of the divine image stamped on it in baptism, and bearing, instead, the image of Satan, do you think, God would accept her in such a condition? No, he would not accept, but reject her, as you would refuse to accept counterfeit, instead of legal, coin. This truth deserves close attention. Let us, then, earnestly contemplate the great outrage done to God by depriving our soul of her divine image, and the punishment awaiting such offenders, and finally the means of restoring the defaced image of God.

I. THE OUTRAGE.

1. By mortal sin the supernatural image of God, engraved in our souls, is entirely destroyed, although her natural likeness to God, consisting in the powers of understanding, free-will, and memory, is preserved; in a similar manner as the most beautiful virgin, when struck with leprosy, or small-pox, loses all her beauty, although the members of her body, as eyes, mouth, hands, are yet the same members as before. When Adam had deprived himself of this supernatural beauty, God called him, and said to him: Where art thou? St. Chrysostom remarks, this voice of the Lord sounded, as if God did not recognize Adam as his

former self, so that he said: Where is my former Adam, where is the beauteous image and likeness of myself which I created?

2. Alexander the Great had his picture taken by the great artist Apelles. How great would have been the wrath of this mighty king, if some one of his subjects had dishonored, or even destroyed, this image. Our soul is not an inanimate, but a living, image of God himself. Ergo.

3. Moreover, what does the grace, by which we partake in a sense of the divine nature, cost him? It costs the blood and life of his only-begotten Son.

4. Again it is the divine intellect which designed this image, and the divine hand which executed this design.

And we are guilty of having destroyed by our sins this supernatural likeness, made by God himself after the model of his own nature, at the expense of the blood and life of his Son. Are you able to represent to your mind a greater outrage?

II. THE PUNISHMENT.

If the enormity of the outrage does not terrify us, the severity of punishment should do so.

1. I do not know whether you ever paid close attention to the answer given to the foolish virgins. "Lord," they said, "Lord, open to us!" "But he answering said: Amen I say to you, I know you not." Mt. xxv, 11. The meaning of these words is, according to St. Ambrose: I see no longer the beautiful image into which I had transformed your soul; I see no longer in you those wonderful and divine features which by my grace and love had been delineated in your immortal souls. Those sins in which you slumbered and slept, have disfigured the beautiful image and inscription, made with my own hand, to such a degree, that I see no vestiges left of it. Therefore I exclude you from my nuptials. "I know you not." Such is the dreadful punishment awaiting us for dishonoring the image of God's Son by sin and tepidity.

2. O God! how many are those Christians to whom the prayers of the Church for the dying will cause terror instead of consolation! "Acknowledge, Lord, thy creature," the Church

will say in commending the agonizing soul to the mercy of God; but alas! divine justice will say to the heart of the sinner: "I know thee not." I am asked to acknowledge my creature? From what feature? Where are the charming traits of my own nature? Where the infinite beauty once imparted to this soul by the blood of my only-begotten Son? I see it deformed by sins; I see the understanding contaminated by vicious thoughts, the will defiled by abominable desires. I see this soul quite disfigured by hatred, revenge, impurity; and thus defiled, am I to acknowledge her as the work of my own hands? I see not my image. In a similar manner God says through Isaias the prophet: "It is not a wise people; therefore he that made it, shall not have mercy on it." Isai. xxvii, 11. And God added: "He that formed it, shall not spare it." From these words we learn that God will not spare his unfaithful people, because he has made and formed it. Being a creature and image of God, you are obliged to preserve this image in its purity and beauty. If God at your death should find his work and image devastated, he that made you shall not have mercy on you; and he that formed you shall not spare you.

III. THE MEANS BY WHICH WE MAY RESTORE TO OUR SOULS THE DIVINE IMAGE.

1. What have we to do? "Remove," says St. Ambrose, "the image of the devil from the coin of your soul, and in its place plant the image of the Saviour," by following the example of Jesus Christ. For who is the true image of God? He who said: "Philip, who seeth me, seeth the Father." He alone who said: "I and the Father are one." If then Jesus Christ is the true image of God, let us endeavor to become similar to him by imitating his example; and the beauty of the divine features will be restored to us. Thirty-three years of earthly stay were not required for our redemption; but Jesus stayed so long with us to present to our eyes a model which we should copy, in order to restore the divine image defaced by sin. Let us then copy in our own lives the patience of our Saviour; let us imitate his

charity, loving not only those who love us, but also those who hate and offend us; let us follow all his virtues, and the image of God will be renewed in our soul.

2. St. Paul the great Apostle wrote to the Galatians: "My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you." Gal. iv, 19. Although I do not possess the zeal of an Apostle, I exhort you again and again to forsake sin and vice, to give up those bad companions, those night ramblings, to refrain your tongue from blaspheming God, and calumniating your neighbor. O that you would follow my exhortations! Happy are you, if at the hour of death the Father should see in your soul the image of his Son, so that he may be justified in saying to you: "You are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High." Ps. lxxxi, 6. Being his children, he will make you joint-heirs with Jesus his Son, as St. Paul assures us: "If sons, heirs also; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Rom. viii, 17.

Peroration: Dearly beloved brethren! If any one of you is conscious of a mortal sin, ah! let him contemplate the sad condition of his soul. She has lost grace, and, in consequence, the almost divine beauty by which she resembled God, and has become like to a wild monster. In such a hideous form do you appear in the eyes of God, of the Blessed Virgin, of your holy guardian angels and patron-saints. If you address yourselves to them, they may say to you what St. Polycarp said to the impious Marcion, when asked by him if he knew him. "I know," said the Saint, "the first-born of the devil." You are not my servant, but from your deformity I see that you are God's enemy, and the devil's slave. Hasten to the feet of the confessor, and make the firm resolution to foster no longer the concupiscence of the flesh, but to put on the garment of virtues, by imitating the example of the God-man, according to the exhortation of the Apostle: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." Rom. xiii, 14.

J. B. Campadelli.

IV.

THE FOLLOWING OF THE HOLY ANGELS.

(On the first Sunday of September, being the Day of the Holy Guardian Angel.)

How full of consolation is the doctrine on the Holy Angels, and particularly on their solicitude in our behalf! "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for those who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?" Heb. i, 14. And this ministry, how necessary is it, to protect us against the many enemies of our salvation, the strongest of whom "as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." I Pet. v, 8. Oh! that the ministry of the holy angels might be crowned with success, that is with the salvation of those committed to their care! This will be the case with us, if we strive to follow the holy angels as our models.

PART I.

WE SHOULD FOLLOW THEM IN SOLICITUDE FOR OURSELVES.

1. By resisting temptations.

a. The holy angels had their time of probation too, when the good angels, with St. Michael as their leader, stood the proof. Apoc. xii, 7 ff.

b. We must also stand the proof in our many struggles against the devil and his associates in the world.

The sad history of the angels' fall is well adapted to take away from our mind two delusions. In the first place, one hears often wicked people say, "There are thousands who lead a still worse life than I do." God is not deterred from inflicting his severe punishment by the numbers of the guilty. Did he not throw into hell the hosts of rebellious spirits? Did he not destroy by the deluge all mankind with the exception of one family? Let us with the good angels remain faithful to God; let us say with Josue: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Josue xxiv, 15. And with Peter: "Though all men

shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized." Mt. xxvi, 33.

Another delusion, deceiving many, is the learning and exalted position of a great many unbelievers and wicked sinners. Lucifer, although one of the first angels, was not able to seduce the good angels. God does not regard the persons; he punished Lucifer and Dives, emperors, kings, bishops and priests. "Fear not those that kill the body, and cannot kill the soul; but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell." Mt. x, 28.

2. *By readily fulfilling the will of God.*

a. The holy angels carry out the will of God with eagerness. "Who makest thy angels spirits; and thy ministers a burning fire." Ps. ciii, 4. "Thy will be done in heaven, as it is on earth." Mt. vi, 10.

b. Let us fulfill the will of God also, everyone in his state of life: father, mother, and children, etc.

3. *By praising God.*

a. The holy angels say incessantly: "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord of hosts; all the earth is full of his glory." Isai. vi, 3. "Praise ye him all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts." Ps. cxlviii, 2.

b. If we take a delight in frequently praising God, in praying often, with devotion and in church, we imitate the holy angels.

4. *By leading a pious, particularly a chaste, life.*

a. The faithful angels are, ever since their probation, adversaries of "the dragon and his angels" (Apoc. xii, 7), and in consequence adversaries of sin. In an especial manner they are attached to virginal purity, by which virtue man most resembles the heavenly spirits, who neither marry nor are given in marriage. Mt. xxii, 30.

b. Those are followers of the holy angels who detest sin and are especially anxious to preserve the virtue of chastity. "The innocent and chaste souls constitute, so to say, a new family of angels, established by Jesus Christ, that angels may praise and adore him not only in heaven, but on earth also." St.

Jerome. Agnes, Cecily, Aloysius, Stanislaus, were such angels in human shape. Would that we might follow them !

PART II.

WE SHOULD TAKE THE HOLY ANGELS FOR OUR MODELS IN OUR
RELATIONS WITH OUR NEIGHBOR.

We should be associates of the holy angels, or rather perform the ministry of angels regarding our fellow-men :

1. By *sincerely loving* them, especially those committed to our care.

a. "The holy angels entertain tender affections for us; they look out of windows, as it were, down upon us; and whenever they see us in danger and affliction, they hasten to defend us." St. Vincent Ferrer. They take, however, the most anxious care of the souls whom they endeavor to save, being aware how precious they are. For "what doth it profit a man," etc. Mt. xvi, 26.

b. Let us love and appreciate, not only our own souls, but also the souls of our fellow-men : parents, the souls of their children; adult persons, the souls of the little ones. For "he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Mt. xviii, 6.

2. *By exhorting and consoling.*

An angel comforted and strengthened Jesus on the mount Olivet, when he was in an agony (Lk. xxii, 43); and St. Paul, when he suffered shipwreck. Act. xxvii, 23. Let us be consoling angels also.

3. *By coming to the assistance* of our needy and dying neighbors.

a. Holy angels assisted Daniel in the den of lions (xiv, 32), Agar in the desert (Gen. xxi, 14); Tobias, father and son (Tobias v, 5; xi, 7); the three young men in the furnace (Dan. iii, 49).

b. We are able to perform the same angelic service by works of mercy. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. John of God, St. Vincent de Paul, were such consoling and assisting angels. The spiritual daughters of St. Vincent are the visible angels of the world, bringing consolation and relief to every kind of human misery.

4. *By warning and deterring from evil.*

a. The Angel of the Lord kept Balaam from cursing the children of Israel, saying: "I am come to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse, and contrary to me." Numb. xxii, 32.

b. Let us also withstand evil, preventing sin wherever we are able to do so. Queen Blanca said to her son Louis, if she knew that he would ever commit a mortal sin, she would prefer seeing him fall down at her feet a corpse.

5. *By delivering your fellow-men from danger.*

a. Two angels came to lead Lot and his family out of Sodom, and "as he lingered, they took his hand, and the hand of his wife, and of his two daughters, * * * and set him without the city." Gen. xix, 16.

b. Parents and superiors, deliver your children and subjects from dangerous societies, as if from a house set on fire; guard them against sin.

6. *By prayer and intercession.*

a. The angels pray for men. "If there shall be an angel speaking for him, one among thousands, to declare man's uprightness, he shall have mercy on him and shall say: Deliver him, that he may not go down to corruption." Job. xxxiii, 23. An angel interceded for Jerusalem and the cities of Judea, that the Lord might have mercy on them. Zach. i, 12. They also offer the prayers of men to God. Tobias xii, 12. Apoc. viii, 2.

b. Let us also pray for one another. Ye parents, pray for your children, as St. Monica prayed for her Augustine. Pray ye all for sinners, that they may be converted; and for in-

nocent souls, that they may persevere. Such is the ministry of angels.

Peroration: Oh! that we would frequently perform these functions of the holy angels! How great a consolation to have on earth or to find one day in eternity souls who gratefully confess, You were my guardian angel; in your house, in your society I have become a better Christian. They will appear as consoling angels on the side of our death-bed, and in the next world an angelic reward will be granted to us. Let us also listen to those who endeavor upon us the service of angels, to our parents, pastors, and confessors. "Take notice of him and hear his voice, and do not think him one to be contemned." Exod. xxiii, 21. O God, increase the number of such visible angels in our midst!

M. Unger.

Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

NEVER LAUGH TO SCORN.

If Ecclesiastes (iii, 4) says, that all things have their season, a time to weep and a time to laugh, the laughing Jesus to scorn near the corpse of the girl was the less in season, as the object of ridicule was an important sentence from the lips of Jesus, whose authority should have caused reverence. The scorners have not died out, but they are numerous especially in our days. According to St. Francis de Sales, one of the worst inclinations in man is the inclination to laugh to scorn. I will endeavor to cause an abhorrence in you of this bad habit, taking my arguments from the writings of this latest Doctor of the Church.

I. LAUGHING TO SCORN IS SINFUL.

1. *It is against the precept of charity.*

a. This is the second commandment like to the first: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Mt. xxii, 39. "This commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother." I John iv, 21.

b. Now nothing is so much opposed to brotherly love as derision. By contumelies we sin against the honor due to our neighbor; by calumnies, against his good name; by backbiting friendship and charity are disturbed amongst men; but by derision the entire man is dishonored, and made contemptible. "The theologians say, with good reason, that derision is the greatest offence one can commit by words against one's neighbor, since other offences are yet attended with respect of some kind, whilst this is done against him with manifest contempt." Philothea iii, 27. Pointed arrows penetrate deeply.

2. *It is opposed to piety.*

a. It is God's holy will that we should become holy, just and pious. "I am the Lord your God: be holy, because I am

holy." Levit. xi, 44. "This is the will of God, your sanctification." I Thess. iv, 3. "He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." Apoc. xxii, 11.

3. *God punishes severely this bad habit.*

a. He has punished the scorers. Two bears came out of the forest and tore two and forty of the boys who had mocked Eliseus. IV Kings ii, 24. For having mocked David, whom she saw dancing before the Lord, "Michol the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death." II Kings vi, 23.

b. God will punish the scorers. "Judgments are prepared for the scorers." Prov. xix 29. "The Lord shall scorn the scorers." iii, 34. For "with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you again." Mt. vii, 2. "Woe to you that laugh now: for you shall mourn and weep." Lk. vi, 25.

II. DIFFERENT WAYS OF BECOMING GUILTY OF THIS SIN.

There are different kinds of this sin, according to its object:

1. Sometimes an attempt is made to ridicule God, and whatever is devoted to God, as the Holy Church, her ceremonies, etc. Scorning of this kind is often blasphemy. Such scorers imitate the vile soldiers who mocked Jesus as king, saying: "Hail, king of the Jews!" Mt. xxvii, 29; or as prophet before the High-Priest, saying: "Prophecy unto us, O Christ: who is he that struck thee?" Mt. xxvi, 68. They imitate the thief on the left hand, the High-Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who mocked Jesus on the Cross. Mt. xxvii, 39. The council of Trent prohibits to abuse the words of Holy Scripture by profane ridicule (Sess. iv), and the Catechism teaches you that it is a sin against the second commandment to speak of God and his Saints in a disdainful manner.

2. Sometimes men are made the object of ridicule:

a. Those holding the place of God, as priests and parents. Cham was cursed by Noe for this vice. Gen. ix, 22, sqq.

b. Those of advanced age, or debilitated, or crippled. God commands us to reverence aged persons. "Rise up before the hoary head; and honor the person of the aged man." Levit. xix, 32. "Despise not a man in his old age: for we shall also become old." Ecclus. viii, 7. "Thou shalt not speak evil of the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind." Levit. xix, 14.

c. Pious persons or those who are on the way of conversion. "The simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn." Job. xii, 4. "Despise not a man that turneth away from sin, nor reproach him therewith." Ecclus. viii, 6.

3. Young people, and worldly-minded people, should especially beware of this sin; the former being tempted by their wantonness, the latter by their indifference to spiritual things. "These men blaspheme whatsoever things they know not." Jude. 10.

III. CHRISTIANS SHOULD DESPISE THE MOCKERIES OF THE WICKED.

1. What are these mockeries?

a. They are empty words, and "what are words else but words; they fly through the air, but hurt no stone." Thomas a Kempis.

b. They are a disgrace to the scorner himself.

c. They are unjust and unfounded, since it is men of superficial knowledge who are generally the scornors.

d. They are useless, although injurious to the scorner himself. The time will come, when they cry out: "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth." Wisd. v, 4, ff.

2. Let us follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles in bearing these follies.

a. Jesus did not desist from raising the girl from the dead, although the people laughed him to scorn; nor did he for-

sake the work of our salvation, although the bystanders mocked him on the Cross, saying: "Come down from the cross." Mt. xxvii, 40. "Having joy proposed unto him, he underwent the Cross, despising the shame." Heb. xii, 2.

b. The Apostles did not mind the mockery, These men are full of new wine (Act. ii, 13), but went on preaching penance unto the remission of sins (V, 38). They preached Christ Crucified, although to the Gentiles foolishness (I Cor. i, 23), remembering the words of their Master: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty, and of his Father's, and of the holy Angels." Lk. ix, 26.

Peroration: Charity united with earnestness becomes the Christian; but uncharitable derision "is an abomination to the Lord." Prov. iii, 32. On the other hand the Christian despises all mockery and scorn, going forward to reach his last end.

St. Francis of Sales.

IV.

TEARS OVER THE DEATH OF OUR DEAR ONES.

By death entering a house joy is changed to sadness. So it was in the house of Jairus. But Jesus said to the minstrels and to the multitude making a noise, "Give place"; thus intimating to us how we should behave at the death of those endeared to us. We are not prohibited from giving vent to our grief by tears; but these tears should be

I. MODERATED BY MODESTY.

1. Well may we weep over the death of our dear ones; for such tears are

a. *Demande*d by nature itself. "For who would prohibit a mother to weep over the death of her child, except a madman?" says a pagan philosopher.

b. *Permitted* by Holy Scripture. "Weep for the dead, for his light hath failed." Ecclus. xxii, 10. "My son, shed

tears over the dead; and begin to lament as if thou hadst suffered some great harm." xxxviii, 16.

c. *Sanctified by the example of Jesus Christ*, who wept at the sepulchre of his friend Lazarus. John xi, 35. "The Lord teaches us by his tears, in what manner we should, according to the law of reason, bewail with moderate tears our friends who have departed this life." St. Cyrillus.

2. Yet let us keep a wise moderation in weeping, too. "Comfort thyself in thy sadness." Eccclus. xxxviii, 17. "We see daily the bewailing of the dead; we see many tears, but no advantage deriving therefrom." St. Bernard.

II. OUR TEARS SHOULD BE SANCTIFIED BY ACQUIESCENCE IN THE DISPOSITIONS OF PROVIDENCE.

1. God is the *Lord of life*; we must humbly recognize his absolute dominion, like Job, who said: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job i, 21.

2. God's *wisdom is inexplorable*. "He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul." Wisd. iv, 11.

3. Sometimes death is the messenger of divine justice. "The Lord also struck the child which the wife of Urias had borne to David; and his life was despaired of. * * * And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died." II Kings xii, 15 ff. We should reverently kiss the rod that chastises us, and sanctify our tears by contrition and penance.

III. OUR TEARS SHOULD BE WIPED AWAY BY FAITH.

Holy faith teaches us

1. That there is an everlasting life, and that our dear ones, if they partake of it, are in an infinitely better condition than we in this vale of tears. "Weep but a little for the dead, for he is at rest." Eccclus. xxii, 11. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me: Write: "Blessed are the dead, who die

in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors." Apoc. xiv, 13. "By thy impetuous tears thou wrongest thy daughter, who is in possession of the celestial beatitude," wrote St. Jerome to Blesilla, who bewailed her Paula too vehemently. He introduces the daughter, saying to her mother: "If thou ever didst love me, envy me not in my glory."

2. We are to see our friends again ere long. They are not lost to us. Who would weep at seeing his friend taking repose, or traveling into a country where he is soon to follow him? "We will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope." I Thess, iv, 12.

Peroration: In such manner the true Christian, at the death of his friends, concedes to nature its right, relieving his grief by tears, which, however, he knows how to moderate by modesty and resignation to God's holy will.

F. X. Massl.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost.

III.

THE HOLY CROSS ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

“Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn ; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.” The destruction of Jerusalem was preceded by many dreadful signs, the last divine warnings to the obstinate Jews. Many impostors claiming the dignity of the Messias seduced crowds of people. The time from the Ascension of Jesus Christ to the fulfillment of his prophecy was remarkable for the frequent famines, earthquakes, and tribulations of all kind, so that even the heathens expected the consummation of the world to be near at hand. Tacitus the Roman historian relates : “Armies were seen in heaven marching towards each other in glittering armour. The temple was lighted up by a sudden fire from the clouds. At once the doors of the temple were opened, and a voice more than human was heard announcing that the gods were going away. At the same time a great commotion was heard from where they went out.” The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus says : “A star was seen above the city, resembling a sword, and a comet appeared during an entire year. Further, before the revolt against the Romans, when the people were assembled in Jerusalem for the Pasch, at the ninth hour of the night, the altar and temple were lighted up by such light, that for half an hour it seemed to be at broad daylight.” These signs will be repeated, in a greater measure, at the approach of the Last Judgment. Of all these signs I select one for our meditation, the Holy Cross which shall appear in heaven (1) to glorify Jesus Christ, and (2) to judge the world.

PART I.

JESUS WILL BE GLORIFIED BY THE CROSS.

“Neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men may honor the Son, as they honor the Father.” John v, 22. “And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.” v, 27. The honor of the Son shall be promoted especially by the appearance of the Cross for the following reason:

1. *On the Cross our Saviour has been humbled the most.* Thus it is becoming that his honor should be returned to him by the same Cross. Only slaves and the vilest criminals were crucified. It was the most painful torture. Jesus was hanging between two criminals, being reputed among them. The most horrible anguish pierced through his hands and feet and all the limbs of his body and the faculties of his soul. “Shall I crucify your king?” said Pilate to the Jews. They answered: “We have no king but Cæsar.” John xix, 15.

2. *All inimical powers have been combating against the Cross.* St. Paul revealed the mystery of the struggle against Jesus and his Church in these remarkable words: “We preach Christ Crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness. But to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” I Cor. i, 23. To the Jews the Cross was a stumbling-block, because they would not believe that their Messiah and King had died this ignominious death. The Gentiles laughed to scorn the faith of the Christians, because they adored a God who had breathed forth his spirit on the “cursed tree.” The Crescent kindled the flames of war to destroy the Cross. The heretics rejected the Cross by rejecting the necessity of penance and mortification. In our days, we see the greater number of the adherents of heresy deny the Son of God who died on the Cross.

3. *Every sin we commit is a struggle against the Cross.* It is not only a renewal of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but it is an opposition to the doctrines preached from the Cross, the di-

vine pulpit. So it is with regard to pride, avarice, intemperance, envy, impurity and all other sins. It may be safely said that the struggle of the individual, as well as of nations, is, in its good works, a struggle on the side of the Cross; and in its bad works, a struggle against the Cross.

Therefore the Cross will appear in heaven, to be the scale by which individuals and nations are to be judged, the glory of the Crucified being thus manifested. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." The Cross preceded and followed by the holy angels and Saints shall appear in the clouds, and Jesus himself, the King of glory and majesty, will in the sight of his Cross exercise his power over all creatures. All mankind will bow before him mourning and trembling. "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him." Apoc. i, 7.

At the same time the spirits of the abyss will lie prostrate before the Cross, which has overcome their power.

Now the mission of Jesus Christ is fulfilled. He descended from heaven to lay the world prostrate to the feet of his Father. It is now consummated, or as St. Paul says: "Afterwards the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God and the Father, when he shall have abolished all principality, and authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then the Son also himself shall be subject to him, who subjected all things to himself, that God may be all in all." I Cor. xv, 24, 28. "And I," says the Lord, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." John xii, 32.

PART II.

THE HOLY CROSS WILL ALSO APPEAR TO JUDGE THE WORLD.

"I saw the dead great and small, standing before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

Apoc. xx. 12. We may understand by the "book of life" the Holy Cross, "the book of books," as the Saints call it.

1. *The reprobate will read their sentence engraved in it.*

a. Behold, what I have suffered for you, will Jesus say to the infidels. For you I toiled hard for thirty years, and announced the good tidings during three years, confirming them by signs and miracles. For you I carried the Cross on my sore shoulders: for you I was nailed upon it. For you heaven and earth were in commotion at the moment of my death, to convince you of my mission. But you have refused to acknowledge a God who died on the Cross, and searched for strange gods being according to the desires of your hearts. You went so far as to hate me and my Cross. Now bear the consequences of your infidelity.

b. The Holy Cross will be a reproach, not only to the infidel, but to every sinner. For every sin is a contempt of the Cross, and a denial of the aspirations of a true disciple of the Lord. Proud, avaricious, impure sinner, will you dare gaze at the sign of the Son of man?

c. The Cross of Jesus Christ will reproach the reprobate for the many abused graces which flowed in vain from this tree of life. For, our faith is the doctrine of the Crucified; all holy sacraments are administered with the use of the sign of the Cross. All these graces will be represented by the Holy Cross to our eyes on the Day of Judgment, which, on the ground of their having been fruitless, will increase the terrors of that dreadful spectacle.

For these reasons Jesus the Crucified will judge and reject the wicked. "He shall thunder with the voice of his majesty." Job xxxvii, 4. "Then shall he speak to them in his anger, and trouble them in his rage." Ps. ii, 5. As Joseph's brethren were terrified, when he said to them, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt, so shall the reprobate stand before their Judge whom they have denied in word and deed. Like the servants of the high-priests on the mount of Olivet, they will fall to the ground, to hear the sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed,

into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels." Mt. xxv, 41.

2. *It will be a consolation of the Elect.*

"Look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand" (Lk. xxi, 28), Thus will the Lord who was crucified address his Elect, and with joy in their face they will gaze at the Holy Cross.

a. They had put all their confidence in the sign of the Son of man. In Jesus Crucified they had believed. And now they behold him glorified, and his Holy Cross resplendent brighter than the sun. * * * Let us in these our days of infidelity embrace the sign of redemption, confessing and protesting our faith before a scornful world!

b. The Holy Cross was to them their only hope. They partook of the fruits of this tree of life, by receiving the sacraments of penance and of the Holy Altar. Now they will hear with a jubilant heart: I have healed your wounds, have released the whole debt. I have witnessed your contrition, and created you anew * * * Let us partake of the blessings of the Cross in our mortal life, that our soul may be safe on that day of reward!

c. In their earthly abode they have carried their cross after Jesus. For He who was hanging on the Cross, is their love. Now they will love with ineffable charity Him whom they have sought and loved hidden under the veil of bread. Their heart will cry out, My Lord and my God! (John xx, 28), when the sentence will be pronounced before the whole world: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Mt. xxv, 34.

O Holy Cross, be thou our strength and guide in life, our consolation in death, our glory in eternity!

Joseph Ehrler.

IV.

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE.

The second coming of the Son of man will take place in a manner quite different from his first coming, as he will not come as Saviour, but as judge and revenger. "For this is the day of the Lord the God of Hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may revenge himself of his enemies." Jerem. xlv, 10. The sentence passed already against each sinner, is repeated before heaven and earth, that the honor of Jesus Christ and the honor of divine justice may be avenged. Therefore Holy Scripture represents to us :

I. *The world before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, that he may be revenged for its outrages inflicted on him.*

The outrages of the world concern partly the grace of Jesus Christ, partly his divine nature, and partly the mystical body of the Lord, the Holy Church, particularly its holy members. It is consequently the design of the Last Judgment :

1. *To avenge grace*—for the resistance and indocility of the world.

a. What is the task of Jesus Christ concerning the world? To subject the world to the Father, either by voluntary subjection, if possible, or at least by constrained subjection. For God's honor is not dependent on our beatitude, but on the maintenance of his absolute dominion over all that is created. "Afterwards the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and the Father, when he shall have abolished all principality, and authority, and power." I Cor. xv, 24.

b. In what manner, and with what success does Christ fulfill this task on earth? By the invitations and inspirations of his grace. His design is that in the gifts of his charity we should find the source of our merits for eternity. Yet, what do we witness? Divine grace is neglected, and abused to God's dishonor.

c. How then is Jesus Christ to accomplish his task? He is by force to establish the kingdom which he was not permitted

to establish by grace. "As I live," saith the Lord God, "I will reign over you with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out." Ezech. xx, 33. Call to mind the terrors of the resurrection, of the appearance of the Judge, of the judgment. The necessary, not meritorius, result will be, "As I live every knee shall bow to me." Rom. xiv, 11. "In that day man shall bow down himself to his Maker." Isai. xvii, 7. "You shall fall among the ruins of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you." Levit. xxvi, 30. In this way Christ avenges his grace, accomplishes his mission, and prepares eternal glory for the Father.

2. *Jesus Christ comes, moreover, to avenge his dignity, for the outrages of the world.*

a. Here on earth he appeared in the form of a servant, in the garment of humanity, similar to us in all things, sin excepted, and suffered ignominy and death, that he might redeem the world. And the consequence? Infidelity, blasphemy, scandal, contempt.

b. At the Last Judgment he appears in divine majesty, "appointed by God to be the judge of the living and of the dead." Act. x, 42. Then all will recognize him, believe in him, and adore him: the Jews, the persecutors of the Christians, and heretics. Woe to them who ever outraged him!

3. *He comes to avenge his Saints*—for the persecutions of the world.

a. The Saints meet with the same fate in the world as their Lord and Master himself. False accusations, reviling, and persecution, are their portion. "You shall be hated by all men for my name's sake," etc. Mt. x, 22-25. Although salutary to the Saints, it is not just, and in consequence it is to be adjusted.

b. Therefore they will be avenged in that dreadful day, when their supposed folly will be proclaimed as the greatest wisdom; when the false accusations against them are disclosed, and their struggles, mortifications, and sufferings are made known to men and angels; when they are set on the right hand of Jesus Christ; whereas the proud revilers will hear the word: "Depart

from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," etc. Then the normal order of things will be inaugurated: oppressed virtue will reign, vice heretofore triumphant will sink into everlasting painful servitude. The promises of the Lord are verified; he is avenged. The Gospel represents also to us

II. *The sinner before the judgment seat of the world*, that divine justice be avenged for his complaints and accusations.

God will come on the Last Day, not so much to judge, as to be judged, that is, to have his dealings concerning the sinner justified by the whole world. Thus he avenges the honor of his justice:

1. *In regard to the dissimulations of the sinner.*

a. The world is full of deceivers and of those who are deceived. Wickedness strives to hide itself, and even covers itself with the mantle of virtue, and earns praise and reward. For suspicious as men are, when there is no foundation for suspicion, they are easily deceived by mere appearances. Many who, in their earthly life, were honored as honest and upright men, will be placed with the goats.

b. In that day all delusion will vanish. Then the world will know the sinner, as God knows him, and will exclaim: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are equity." Ps. cxviii, 75. The inward and outward life of every person will be laid open in the sight of all. The world will by a miracle participate in the omniscience of God, of whom it is written: "Neither is there any creature invisible in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom our speech is." Heb. v, 13. "Then I shall know even as I am known." I Cor. xiii, 12.

2. *In regard to the excuses of the sinner.*

a. He complains of want of grace. But in that day the world will know him as one who despised grace, and as an unfaithful steward.

b. He uses as pretext the vehemence of his temper and passions. But it will be made manifest that he has fostered and fondled his passions; and the world will condemn him.

c. The sinner excuses his vices as frailties of human nature, which do not dishonor before the world. But on that dreadful day the world will confess its error. "We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us," etc. Wisd. v, 6. The world will now judge as God judges. "Judgment shall be revealed as water, and justice as a mighty torrent." Amos v, 24.

d. The sinner pretends not to believe that there is a hell awaiting him, because such punishment would not be proportionate to the sin committed. But on that day all the world will acknowledge that hell is a just punishment, and will say: "Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right." Ps. cxvii, 137. What misery to be condemned by God, by one's conscience, by the world, by false friends and accomplices!

Peroration: Let this meditation move us to judge now as we shall judge and be judged on that day; to act as we shall then wish to have acted, to live so that we may not tremble, when we once appear before God and the world to be judged.

Neuville.

Funeral Sermons.

I.

AT THE FUNERAL OF A CHILD.

I. WHAT FAITH TEACHES US WITH REGARD TO THIS CHILD.

1. Death knows no different seasons. He mows down no less in spring the youngest and tenderest flowers, than in fall the ripe herbs. "Man cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed." Job. xiv, 2.

2. This tender flower has, however, not faded away, but God in his wisdom has transplanted it from this world into his Heavenly Paradise. Perhaps he foresaw, the hoar-frost of sin and vice might injure, or the storm of temptations blow it to the ground. "He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul." Wisd. iii, 11.

II. ADMONITIONS FOR THE LIVING.

1. Ye parents, dry your tears, and thank God. Perhaps blind love would have prevented you to train this child to be a consolation in your declining age. However that may be, it is quite certain that your tender flower has been transplanted into God's garden, where it will bloom for ever. You are now parents of an angel.

2. We all have been planted in the garden of the Church, and have been nourished, not only by baptism, as this child, but also by other sacraments, and have thus grown into trees. Is the Heavenly Gardner to find fruit on us? With many of us spring and summer have passed; the autumn of our life is approaching, and then it will be winter. Oh! let us incessantly implore from Heaven the dew of grace! Let us, while we have time, bring forth fruit worthy of life everlasting.

Hiller.

II.

AT THE FUNERAL OF A YOUNG PERSON.

I. It is an immutable law, that whoever enters into this world, must one day leave for another world.

1. We are yet here, and the next world awaits us already. Let us never forget that we are not here, to stay.

2. As we all have to leave, every one should make due preparation, that his departure may be to him a blessing, and to his friends a consolation.

3. No one knows, how soon, and when death will call on him. Be therefore prepared to meet death at any moment.

II. Take a warning, whilst it is yet time.

1. To everyone of us a measure of sins is set, which we cannot pass, without incurring the due punishment.

2. Death does not regard earthly conditions; neither youth, nor health or strength, nor dignity or position in life.

III. Ye young people, who are present here,

1. Lay flowers upon this grave, saying: Such is my life, withering away like a flower.

2. Read the inscription made by God himself: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." He who fulfills this and all the commandments of God, has lived many years, although he have faded away early in the morning of his temporal life.

J. M. Sailer.

III.

AT THE FUNERAL OF AGED PERSONS.

Our deceased friend had reached a high age. This was certainly a blessing of God, who then afforded him an opportunity of performing many good works. Yet, *no human life, be it ever so long, holds comparison with eternity.*

1. Holy Scripture (a) *compares* it to a sailing vessel, to the swift flight of the bird, to the arrow of the bow, to the fading

flower, to the fleeting shadow, etc., and (b) *says*: "The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with thee." Job xiv, 5. Jacob being asked by Pharaoh: How many are the days of the years of thy life? gave the remarkable answer: "The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few and evil." Gen. xlvii, 9.

2. Daily experience teaches (a) that to aged persons their life appears like a dream, and (b) that after death they are soon forgotten. New generations walk over their graves.

Nevertheless we should often compare our life with eternity, that we may not be infatuated

1. With the perishable goods and joys of this world,
2. Nor oppressed by the cares, the trials and tribulations of life. Let us so employ our time, that we may gain a happy eternity.

Hiller.

IV.

AT THE FUNERAL OF A MERCHANT OR BUSINESS MAN.

While paying the last honors to a merchant, we may well remember the words of the Gospel: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls; who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." Mt. xiii, 45. We all are such merchants, seeking the pearl of great price, heaven.

1. It is our most important task to gain heaven. We are created for heaven. Heaven gained or lost, all is gained or lost, for ever. And we must give an account of the use we make of the gifts of nature and grace.

2. Heaven is the most precious jewel. As its joys last for ever, all earthly things can not be compared with them. The merchant in the Gospel sold all he had, to buy the pearl of great price. Whatever we may do and suffer for heaven's sake, we shall never regret. Thomas More said to his wife: "For

twenty miserable years should I exchange the everlasting joys of heaven? You are no good merchant."

3. We must use all efforts to gain heaven. How many and great are the troubles of those merchants who seek after temporal goods! The way leading to heaven is narrow. Let us conquer our passions, that are the obstacles in our way to heaven. Let us be punctual in our prayers and the reception of the Holy Sacraments.

Let us hope that our departed friend has found this pearl of great price; and as he may yet be kept from its possession for a time, let us by our prayers and good works hasten to his assistance.

Scherer.

V.

AT THE FUNERAL OF A FARMER.

Our brother, whose mortal remains we are to return to the earth, whence they were taken, has during the greater part of his life tilled the soil, earning his bread in the sweat of his brow. I hope that he has found the treasure hidden in a field. For, "the kingdom of heaven," says our Saviour, "is like unto a treasure hidden in a field." Mt. xiii, 44.

I. FARMING IS PLANTING FOR HEAVEN.

1. By the means of grace it affords:

a. It promotes simplicity, guards from many dangers of a worldly life, forces to industry, etc.

b. It facilitates the remembrance of God, since there is no state of life, where you become in a more palpable manner convinced of the inefficacy of man's efforts, when deprived of divine blessing. The farmer expects from his Heavenly Father rain, dew, sunshine, etc., in due season. Besides your mind is naturally elevated to God, when you are surrounded by the beauty and fertility of nature.

2. By the doctrines of which it reminds you. "The field is the world." Mt. xiii, 38. Sowing and reaping, wheat and cockle, trees and their fruits, all is so significant, a continual language by signs, in which God converses with the heart of man.

3. By the many merits, which you can gain. When, in consequence of the first sin the earth was cursed, God said: "With labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof 1 the days of thy life. * * * In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken." Gen. iii, 17, 19. Agriculture therefore, is the oldest of all the states of life, the work of penance ordained by God himself.

He who tills the soil with this intention, has truly found in it a treasure, worth more than gold and precious stones.

II. THE CHRISTIAN BURIAL IS LIKE A SOWING FOR HEAVEN.

1. A consolation for us, "that you be not sorrowful, even as others who have no hope." I Thess. iv, 12. "It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory," etc. I Cor. xv, 42-44. Death is, therefore, that inevitable passage to eternal glory, of which the farmer is so often reminded: "Unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground, and die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John xii, 24. How great will be our joy at seeing one another again in the state of glory!

2. It is a wholesome admonition for us. "What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in the flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the Spirit, of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail: for in due time we shall reap, not failing." Gal. vi, 8. "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly." II Cor. ix, 6.

Let us hope that our deceased brother may have found the treasure in the field, and secured the treasure of which the Christian burial reminds us. Let us come to his assistance by prayer, etc., so as to recompensate for his failings.

P. A. Scherer.

ERRATA.

Page 60, line 18, excuses, read *excesses*.

" 72, " 18, and die, read *shall not die*.

" 93, " 14, read : the well-spring of all graces, the focus of all the celestial beams.

Page 97, line 6, read, Church *has* within.

" 99, " 17, Father, read *Tabitha*,

" 101, " 26, seed, read *souls*.

" 102, " 15, read, propagation of *faith*.

" 106, " 28, read, misery and *sinfulness*.

" 113, " 16, form, read *forth*.

" 121, " 10, read, He is like a *man*.

" 144, " 11, read, *mystery* of iniquity.

" 160, " 1, read, By *beholding*.

" 164, " 24, John, read Jeremias.

" 175, " 27, read, in our soul as her food.

" 194, " 26, fourteenth, read *tenth*.

" 238, " 5, read, The Holy Fathers appropriately call.

" 251, " 19, course, read *cause*.

" 262, " 12, Son, read Sun.

" 281, " 16, read, *at* his command.

" 284, " 28, this, read *their*.

" 337, " 32, boldness, read coldness.

" 338, " 5, more, read *persevere*.

" 364, " 6, dele *viz. heart*.

" 386, " 1, beauty, read bounty.

" 396, " 4, Omnipotent, read omnipresent.







